SEPTEMBER 1953

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

Nathan Glazer — Stanley Edgar Hyman — Paul Kecskemeti

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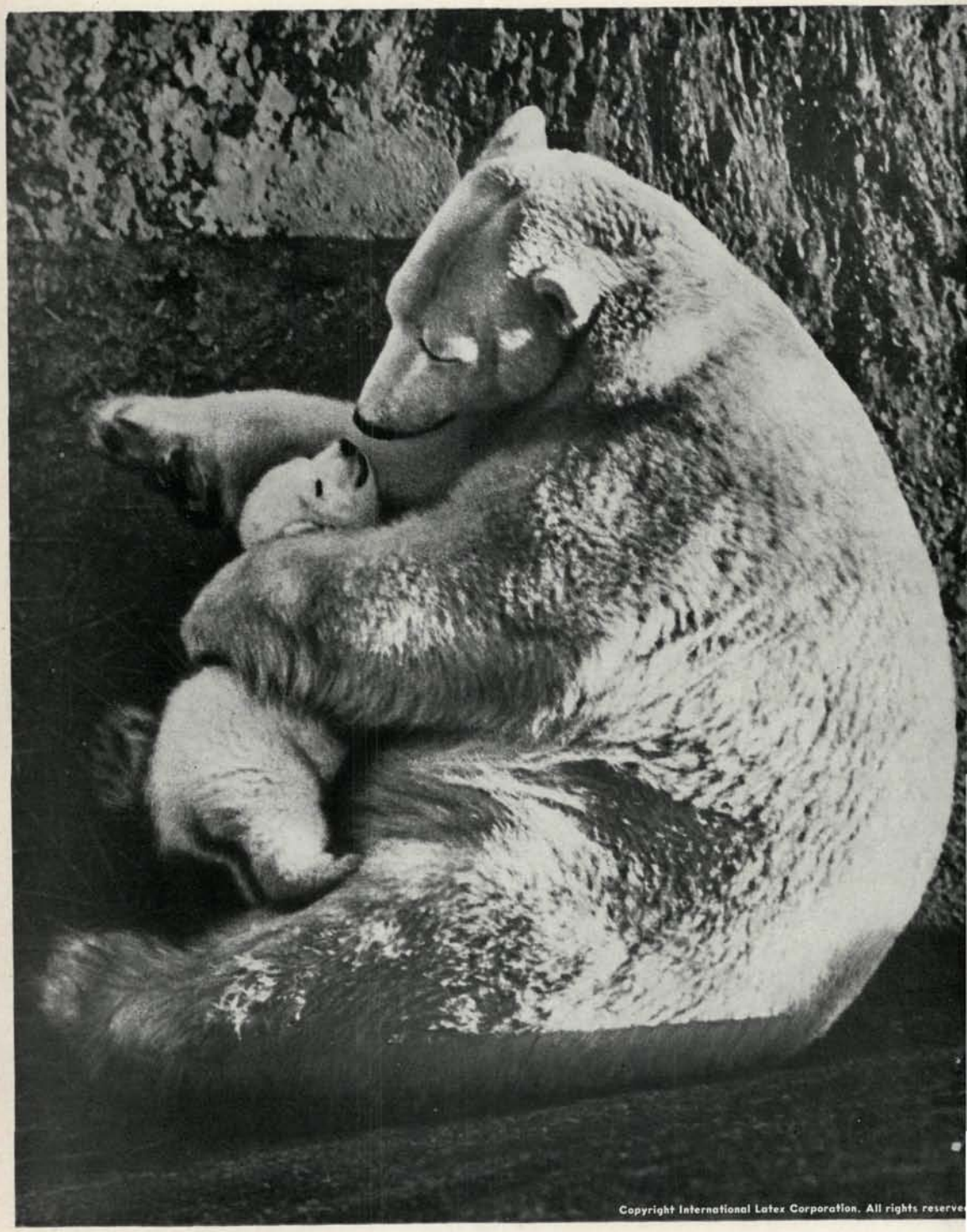

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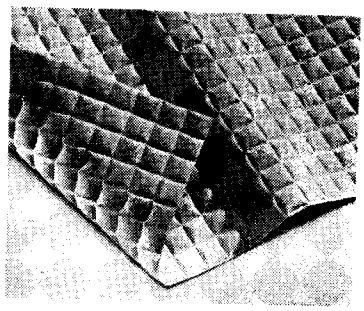

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COMMENTARY, incorporating *Contemporary Jewish Record:* Published monthly by the American Jewish Committee. 50c a copy; $5.00 a year; 2 years $8.00; 3 years, $10.00. Canadian and Foreign $1.00 a year additional. Offices, 34 West 33rd Street, New York 1. Re-entered as second class matter October 30, 1945 at the post office in New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879. Copyright 1953, by the American Jewish Committee. All rights, including translation into other languages, reserved by the publisher in the United States, Great Britain, Mexico, and all countries participating in the International Copyright Convention and the Pan-American Copyright Convention. Indexed in Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature, Magazine Subject Index, and Public Affairs Information Service.

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IN FORTHCOMING ISSUES OF

COMMENTARY

The Fight for an International Bill of Rights *Max Beer*

When the United Nations was launched in San Francisco in 1945, it was taken for granted by its leading figures that the preparation of an international Bill of Rights would be its first major task, equalling in importance the safeguarding of peace itself. Today, the discussions on human rights at the UN drag on barely noticed. Dr. Beer describes how the concept of an international bill of rights was reduced to its present insignificance, and tells us why he believes it is urgent that we regain the sense of its importance held by the founders of the UN.

The Arabs Within Israel *Hal Lehrman*

The author of *Israel: The Beginning and Tomorrow,* whose articles in COMMENTARY have done much to educate world opinion on the realities shaping the new state's development, has left for an extended stay there. His first report in the new series he will contribute to these pages will deal with the thorny problem of the situation of the Arabs within Israel.

The Facts on Jewish-Gentile Intermarriage *Hershel Shanks*

The facts on this widely discussed question are, unfortunately, very few, but Mr. Shanks, who has conducted research on this problem, has collected and analyzed those that there are. He is also able, from his own research, to answer such vexed questions as whether there is more or less intermarriage in large Jewish communities than in small ones. In the department "The Study of Man."

The Jewish Prayerbook and Its Revisers *Theodor H. Gaster*

The Jewish prayerbook has been translated and retranslated into English almost as many times as the Bible in recent years. Dr. Gaster takes a close look at the different versions, compares them with the original, and comes up with a verdict that does not mince words.

Why the Jew Covers His Head *R. Brasch*

Strange to tell, the Jewish custom of keeping one's head covered during worship and study is not commanded by Jewish law, but is a custom borrowed from pagan neighbors in Babylon during the early centuries of our era. Dr. Brasch, rabbi in Australia, tells how the custom spread to Jews elsewhere and how it came to be justified.

Behind Israel's Governing Philosophy *Judd L. Teller*

In America we know a good deal about Herzl, Achad Haam, Weizmann, and Jabotinsky, but oddly enough we have little familiarity with the personalities whose lives and thoughts molded the mentality of the particular elite that won and now holds power in Israel. Judd L. Teller here tells us something of the laborite founding fathers of Israel.

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COMMENTARY

PROSPECTS AT THE FAR EASTERN PEACE TABLE

The Thorny Problem of Red China and Formosa

G. F. HUDSON

IF, AS Clausewitz said, war is the pursuit of policy by other means, it follows that the end of a war means a return to the methods of diplomacy, but under new conditions resulting from the ordeal by battle. It is, of course, possible that the end of a war may leave the belligerents in virtually the same positions as they held when it began. But in such a case one side or the other will have failed to achieve an objective of policy by means of force, and this failure can have important effects on the factors of self-confidence, prestige, and resolution involved in the political conflict. After a war the political representatives of the belligerents sit down at the conference table with the bargaining hands, strong or weak, which their soldiers have given them, and each side has in mind the possibility of a renewed resort to "other means" if the political negotiations should fail to produce an agreed peace treaty.

The prospects for either side of achieving aims of policy at a postwar peace conference depend partly on the military situation at the end of the war and partly on the relative degrees of unity and strength of purpose in the two ex-belligerent camps. The military outcome of the struggle is obviously the primary condition of negotiation. Unless there is a complete political disintegration in the ranks of the enemy, it is never possible to dictate terms at the conference table after failure to achieve victory on the field of battle. Only decisive success in military operations enables one side to carry out its will contrary to the will of the other.

In the Korean war the fact that the Allies (by which term it is convenient to designate that section of the United Nations which has actually engaged in armed resistance to aggression in Korea) have refrained from seeking decisive military victory has set very narrow limits to what they can expect to achieve in the forthcoming political conference.

This is a hard fact, however unpleasant it may be. Unfortunately, public opinion in the democracies seems as yet unwilling to recognize that a price has to be paid for failure to win the war in Korea, and expects the diplomats to produce a satisfactory peace

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THE United States, G. F. HUDSON here points out, is about to enter for the first time a peace conference following upon a war it has not won. It is a new and strange position for this country to find itself in, and it is in dilemmas such as these that Mr. Hudson's customary sober and incisive analyses of the problems the West will face in the continuing cold war have stood us in very good stead. Mr. Hudson is a fellow of All Souls College at Oxford, and a frequent contributor to COMMENTARY. He is the author of three books on the Western impact on the Far East.

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treaty like a rabbit out of a hat after the military commanders have been prevented from providing them with the requisite levers of power. It is, after all, a new experience for both the American and British peoples to go to a peace conference without having previously won the war. Without going further back in their history than 1914, America and Britain have since that date been allies in two great wars at the end of which they were decisively victorious over the enemy. In 1918 Germany had to accept armistice terms which rendered her incapable of further armed resistance, and in 1945 both Germany and Japan were brought to unconditional surrender. If the political sequel in each case was unsatisfactory, it was due to dissensions among the victors, not to any inability to enforce the will of the victors on the vanquished.

But in 1953 the Allies in Korea have to deal with a power against whom they have deliberately refrained from carrying on hostilities in a really damaging form, and who is, as a result, stronger and more self-confident at the end of the contest than it was at the beginning. It is not clear how the Allied governments or the United Nations Assembly can expect to achieve by diplomacy in Korea any objective beyond the recognition of what they have actually succeeded in preserving by force of arms.

THE original purpose of the United Nations intervention in Korea was to assist the South Korean state in repelling the Communist invasion launched against it from the north. If there had never been any other purpose, the Allies could have claimed victory in the war and a thorough vindication of the authority of the United Nations, for the invasion was repelled and the battle line on which the war has ended is for the most part north of the 38th Parallel.

But in October 1950 the United Nations Assembly authorized its military commander to establish control "throughout Korea." This was in accordance with the Assembly's previous assumption of responsibility for a settlement of the "Korean Question." But the military advance to the Yalu was turned into defeat by Chinese intervention, and this defeat has in the military sphere been accepted as final; at any rate there has been no attempt since then to do more than hold a line close to the 38th Parallel.

Having accepted defeat, the Allies did their best to forget that they had ever said anything about unifying Korea. But President Syngman Rhee, in his unpleasant and provocative way, recently reminded them that the Assembly resolution still stood as the last official statement of Allied war aims, and the world has now been given to understand that the Allied representatives will go to the conference table demanding the unification of Korea—failing which Mr. Dulles has indicated that America will "walk out" of the conference.

But why should Communist China agree to the unification of Korea on any terms but her own? The Communists still control one half of Korea. Why should they give up this substantial asset in exchange for a Korean national unity in which it is very unlikely that they could gain power through constitutional politics after being deprived of their separate military and police forces? If the Communists were to agree to a unification of Korea—and it is quite possible that they will ostensibly do so for tactical purposes—it would only be on conditions they considered sufficient to assure them control of the new amalgamated state. Allied acceptance of such conditions would be equivalent to handing over the whole of Korea to Communist rule—an outcome which some tens of thousands of Allied soldiers have given their lives to avert. If the Allies have failed to occupy, or evict the Chinese army from, North Korea, there does not appear to be any way by which they can establish the rule of a presumably non-Communist unified Korea in Pyongyang, and it would be far better to base policy openly on the assumption of an indefinite continuation of two separate states in the Korean peninsula rather than to proclaim the unification of Korea as an attainable goal.

Barring some unexpected fundamental

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change in the international situation, pursuit of this objective by the Allied delegates without a sufficient leverage of power can only lead either to humiliating failure, or else to the purchase of Korean unity by acceptance of conditions likely to have disastrous consequences. Nor would walking out of the conference serve any useful purpose unless it were to be accompanied by a convincing threat of some action which would really alarm Peking. But as long as American bombers do not start hitting Chinese industry it is of no great concern to the Chinese Communist leaders whether American delegates to a conference walk in, out, or sideways.

THE question whether Korea is to be unified or not is, in any case, only of secondary importance to the larger perspective of Far Eastern affairs as they have been affected by the Korean war. Much more serious is the question whether the experience of this war has been such as to deter Communist China from further aggressive acts or whether the winding-up of the Korean war is to be followed shortly by new armed enterprises elsewhere.

This is indeed a question which does not involve the policy of China alone. As long as Chinese power depends in as large a measure as it does on the moral and material support of the Soviet Union, Chinese truculence is liable at any time to be reduced by a genuine turn of Soviet policy into more peaceful courses. But on the assumption that Peking continues to enjoy the cover of the Russian alliance and plentiful supplies of Russian armaments, the Korean experience is unlikely to deter the Chinese Communists from future moves to expand in other directions.

It is true that they have failed to drive the Allies out of Korea and their army has suffered heavy casualties in nearly three years of fighting. But they have saved the North Korean Communist state from extinction, they have gained a substantial military victory which has never been reversed, and their casualties have been negligible in comparison with the manpower of the most populous nation on earth.

Internally, they have gained enormously from the war in prestige and power. They have been able to rally the Chinese people behind their regime by the appeal to national patriotism. After more than a century of Chinese weakness and humiliation they have achieved a military triumph against a coalition of the great powers of the West, while China's own territory has been miraculously preserved from the operations of war—an outcome which is represented by Communist propaganda as due to the protective might of the "peace camp" and gains corresponding popularity for the policy of alliance with Russia. Nothing succeeds like success, and Mao Tse-tung has ministered to Chinese national pride, self-esteem, and anti-Western resentments in a way which has conveniently distracted attention from the muddles of Communist economic policy and the fact that the Soviet bloc can only give China a fraction of the urgently required economic assistance which, but for Communist truculence, could be obtained from the West.

But if nothing succeeds like success, it is equally true that nothing fails like failure, and the Chinese would have had very different sentiments towards their present rulers if the People's Volunteers had been driven back across the Yalu and if the principal power stations and heavy industrial plants of China had been wrecked by attack from the air. Even if the Communist regime had survived such a catastrophe—which would certainly have put a very severe strain on its stability—it would hardly have had much appetite for further adventures.

But the Allied governments, for reasons which seemed to them sufficient, decided neither to use their air power against China nor to require Chinese evacuation of Korea as the condition for an armistice—which they were in a position to enforce when the Chinese asked for a truce in the summer of 1951. As a result, the Chinese people and their Communist rulers have been encouraged to regard the United States and the other

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nations which have taken part in the Korean war as virtually a negligible quantity; the maximum strength of the non-Communist world has apparently been arrayed against China in Korea and has accomplished nothing but a limited holding action. It is logical for the Chinese to assume that, if they move forward somewhere else in the near future, nothing more serious is likely to happen to them than what they have suffered during the last three years, and that the opposition next time will probably be less, and not more, formidable than in Korea.

THE temptation to try something in Southeast Asia is consequently very great. Here is a situation of weakness, a zone of small unstable states or colonial regimes in process of quitting, with large Chinese immigrant communities and local Communist parties for building fifth columns. Here, above all, is the lure of developed natural resources, control of which would be as great an asset for Communist China and the Soviet bloc as denial of them would be a disaster for the free world.

The key to all this is in Indo-China, where the perennial, undecided war, which has been going on since 1947, provides every pretext for intervention, with the Vietnamese government on one side recognized by the Western powers and a rival authority recognized by Moscow and Peking. So far Chinese Communist help to the Communist-controlled Vietminh has been limited to supplies of arms and technical training, but deserters from the Vietminh have reported that Ho Chi-minh has an assurance from Peking that Chinese troops will be sent in, as they were in Korea, if at any time the Vietminh suffer serious reverses. This means that the Vietminh should win either way, for if they are strong enough to win without Chinese reinforcement, they will turn Indo-China Communist by themselves, and if they are not, a Chinese army will come in and do the job for them.

This is the danger which the American, British, and French governments have constantly to bear in mind as they prepare for the political conference which in October is to discuss the future of Korea and "related issues." The Far Eastern situation will be rendered, not better, but worse, if the only result of a cessation of fighting in Korea, or even an agreed settlement, is to set free China's armed forces for a move to the south.

One thing may be considered certain: that if Chinese forces were to enter Indo-China and overwhelm the French and Bao Dai troops there—and the latter have no margin of strength sufficient for coping with such a reinforcement of the Vietminh—there would be no second campaign on the lines of the United Nations' intervention in Korea. The sixteen nations which have fought in Korea will not be disposed to commit their soldiers a second time to a prolonged and costly war on the mainland of Asia under the same crippling strategic restrictions. With more than 140,000 casualties on the record for Korea, the American people would not be likely to endorse the sending of American infantry to face death in the jungles of Tongking, while the American naval and air arms were forbidden to touch the territory of China.

If China moves again, the Western statesmen will have to make up their minds either to hit China with strategic air power or pull out altogether. Those politicians and diplomats who believe that drastic action should never be taken against China because it might provoke Russian intervention ought to follow out their opinion to its logical conclusion and urge that Southeast Asia be abandoned completely in the event of a Chinese invasion. But if policy-making quarters in Washington, London, and Paris come to the conclusion that such an invasion should be countered by direct warfare against China, then their wisest course will be to convey discreetly to the Peking Government a solemn warning that the territorial immunity China has enjoyed during the Korean war would no longer be granted to her if she committed a second aggression. The best hope of deterring the Chinese Communist leaders from embarking on a new and fatal adventure lies in convincing

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them that if they again cross an international frontier they will bring on their country the whole ordeal of modern war.

Such a warning would, of course, fail in its effect if it appeared to Peking as a bluff that could be called. There would have to be a sufficiently manifest unity and determination on the Allied side to carry conviction that the words meant what they said. If the Allies of the Korean war in the months ahead present to China a picture of dissension and vacillation among themselves, it will be taken by China's rulers as implying that they are free to go ahead without excessive risk on any projects of expansion they have in mind.

IT DOES not follow from this situation that the only way of dealing with Communist China is to maintain towards it an attitude of rigid and unyielding antagonism. It is no longer possible to maintain a purely negative position in relation to the Peking government now that the Allies, including the United States, have agreed to negotiate with its representatives at a political conference for a settlement in Korea. The task of Allied diplomacy, whether at this conference or in subsequent contacts, must be to impress on the Chinese Communists the firmness of their resolve to prevent any further aggression, and also to take advantage of any signs that Peking is having second thoughts about the wisdom of extreme policies, or showing desires to loosen its ties with Moscow.

Such normal procedures of diplomacy, however, cannot but raise at every step the question of the international juridical status of the Chinese People's Republic, and particularly of China's seat in the United Nations. Unfortunately this is just the issue on which the policies of the United States and Britain are most sharply divergent, and for that very reason it is the issue on which Communist diplomacy may be expected to concentrate. That the Kremlin regards it as the most favorable opportunity for driving a wedge between the principal Western powers has been strikingly demonstrated by the Soviet note in reply to the Western powers' request for a foreign ministers' conference to discuss the problems of Germany and Austria. The Soviet note goes out of its way to drag in Asian affairs and declares:

"Responsibility for maintaining peace and international security rests above all, as can be seen from the United Nations Charter, with the five powers: the United States, Britain, France, the Soviet Union, and the Chinese People's Republic. . . . In the discussion of questions concerning measures for decreasing tension in international relations the participation of the Chinese People's Republic is essential. The great Chinese people are united and rallied as never before by the Chinese People's Republic and they now justly demand the reestablishment of their legal rights in all international affairs."

There is a great danger that under this kind of pressure the American and British governments will be forced further and further apart until irreparable damage has been done to their solidarity in the defence of the free world. It is therefore imperative to seek for some course of compromise between the American and British views on the question of Chinese representation in the United Nations. These views are strongly adhered to on both sides and, whatever opinion may be held on their validity, their conflict is a hard fact which must be faced frankly if Anglo-American relations are to avoid a vicious spiral of recrimination and misunderstanding.

The American case is that membership of the United Nations is conditional on conduct in conformity with the principles of the Charter; that no state or government which has been convicted of an act of aggression should be allowed to exercise rights of membership until it has purged its offense and given evidence of an intention not to repeat it; and that it will fatally discredit the United Nations as an institution if an aggressor succeeds in "shooting his way" into it.

The British argue in reply that the Communists have effective control of the mainland of China and that there is no early prospect of their being overthrown; that

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governments with effective power should be recognized as representing their states for purposes of international relations; and that, as the United Nations already includes five Communist states whose basic principles of conduct are the same as those of the Chinese People's Republic, its moral integrity cannot really be much affected by the addition of a sixth.

IF, HOWEVER, the controversy is confined to the abstract issue of qualifications for diplomatic recognition or United Nations membership, it is hardly capable of solution, for there is no doubt that there has long been—quite independently of the question of China—a deep difference between American and British approaches to problems of recognition. But the current conflict is primarily a question of practical politics involving a very concrete matter without which the more theoretical aspects of the case would hardly have assumed their present importance. This is the problem of Formosa.

The strongest practical objection to the admission of the Peking government to China's seat in the United Nations is that it would inevitably produce a grave crisis over American support for the Nationalist government in Formosa. Transfer of the United Nations seat would deprive the Nationalist government of all international status; the United Nations as such would have recognized the Communist regime as the *de jure* government of China with a title to all Chinese territory, and would therefore be committed to regarding any aid or protection for the Nationalists in Formosa as an aggression against China. Unless the United States were to repudiate its present policy of support for the Nationalists in Formosa simultaneously with consent to Communist China's representation in the United Nations, the American government would be in a politically untenable position as soon as Communist China brought up the Formosan question. The questions of Formosa and of Chinese representation in the United Nations are thus inseparable as long as Formosa is in international law simply a province of China—which it has been at any rate since Japan formally renounced sovereignty over it by the terms of the San Francisco peace treaty.

The British government is, and always has been, ready to let the Chinese Communists take Formosa if they can do so without interference. So also apparently was the American government at the beginning of 1950. But the fact that the United States has, even though on its own solitary responsibility and ostensibly only in connection with the Korean war, protected and aided Formosa since the summer of 1950 has created a new situation in which the abandonment of the Nationalists would have very serious moral and political consequences.

Deprived of American support, the Nationalists could not hold out for long against the superior Chinese manpower and Soviet armaments at the disposal of the Peking government. The fall of the island would probably be followed by massacres, executions, and "brain-washings" of the kind which the events of the last three years have led the world to expect from Mao Tse-tung's regime. It goes without saying that such a spectacle would destroy all confidence throughout Asia in America's good faith or constancy in the containment of Communism. Every non-Communist government looking to America for support could in the future expect only to be helped as a matter of temporary convenience and thrown to the wolves as soon as the time came for a deal with the enemy. For this reason, if for no other, it would be disastrous folly simply to "throw in" Formosa as part of a "trade" with Peking.

THERE are, however, much more positive reasons why it is essential for the Allies to preserve Formosa from Communist conquest permanently, and not simply as a measure of momentary precaution. Formosa is the residue of non-Communist China, not a large or populous area in comparison with the vast realm over which Mao Tse-Tung holds sway, but still a piece of Chinese earth under Chinese administration. As such, it

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is a challenge to Communism of a kind which has no parallel in relation to the Russian, Czech, or Polish peoples.

Usually, when Communism gains power in a country, the only voices which can still speak in dissent are those of refugees who have found political asylum in a foreign land. But the exile always tends to degenerate politically. Separated from his own people and deprived of all opportunities for responsible political action, he soon comes to inhabit an unreal world of theoretical speculation and unrestrained fancy. If he has the chance to speak to his nation, it is from foreign soil and by favor of a foreign government. If the East Germans are so much more restive under Communist rule than the peoples of other East European satellite countries, it is largely because they can see an alternative in terms of their own national life close before their eyes; they are not dependent on foreigners or on *émigrés* abroad to give them a lead against Grotewohl.

In the Far East likewise the fact that there still remains an area of non-Communist political and cultural life on Chinese soil means that the Communist monopoly of control over the Chinese people is incomplete, and this gap in the curtain is likely to become more and more embarrassing for the Communists as time goes on, if they continue to be prevented from closing it by the capture of the recalcitrant island.

It is true that the Kuomintang in the last days of its rule on the mainland was deeply demoralized and discredited, but there is evidence of a real regeneration since the transfer to Formosa. The healthy, constructive element in the party, which was formerly overshadowed by the reactionary, militarist wing, has again come to the fore and its recent administrative record in the insular province is promising for the future. Formosa is now a laboratory in which non-Communist solutions for Chinese problems can be worked out with American economic and technical assistance, and insofar as the experiments are successful no Communist brain-washing or censorship will be able entirely to conceal what is achieved from the Chinese people on the mainland.

The insularity of Formosa makes it defensible with only a moderate commitment of American aid. On the other hand, as long as there is no major war, there is no prospect for the near future that the Nationalist government can reconquer the mainland of China. The situation at the moment is a stalemate, with the Russian-aided Communist government holding the mainland and the American-aided Nationalist government holding Formosa. The only basis for "coexistence" without chronic war in the Far East is that this situation should be given regular juridical form by the declaration of Formosa as a separate, independent, sovereign state. It would then become possible for the United Nations to recognize the Peking government as the authority representing China by its effective control of the mainland without giving it a claim to Formosa. The admission of the People's Republic to China's existing seat in the United Nations would be conditional on the simultaneous admission of Formosa (or Taiwan, as it calls itself) as a new member state, and both Moscow and Peking would have to undertake not to use the veto to prevent it.

Such a compromise would not indeed be acceptable to that section of American opinion which is opposed on principle to any recognition of Communist China. But it would definitely keep Formosa out of Communist hands and salvage what can be salvaged from the wreck of China. The only alternative is the indefinite continuation of a state of affairs in which no damage would be done to Communist China, but the Western powers be divided so deeply on policy that the Kremlin would have a wonderful opportunity to split them apart. It cannot, of course, be assumed that the Soviet bloc would be prepared to agree to the independence of Formosa as the condition of a settlement; but if they refused, the Peking government would have to stay out of the United Nations. The political position of the United States would,

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however, then be much stronger than it is now, for it would have made a reasonable offer of compromise instead of adopting an intransigent, negative attitude towards the whole question.

There has been talk in some quarters of a United Nations trusteeship as a solution for the problem of Formosa. But trusteeship would be quite unsuitable in this case. It is a device applicable to a primitive people or to an area incapable of forming a national state, but not to a government formerly reckoned among the great powers of the world and still ruling territory more populous than Norway. Trusteeship would give Formosa no definite or assured international status; it would destroy the basis of Nationalist authority on the island itself and rally patriotic sentiment to the side of the People's Republic. Independence, on the other hand, would preserve for the Nationalist regime the dignity of a sovereign state with diplomatic representation abroad. It would still be a Chinese state and would be free to reunite with the rest of China whenever political changes on the mainland should make voluntary reunion possible. The Kuomintang would no doubt object even to the idea of Formosan independence as involving surrender of its claim to be the sole legitimate government of all China, but if it seriously obstructed a settlement otherwise obtainable, it would have to be told that independence was the only political basis on which it could expect to receive continued American support. The Korean war has ended with a *de facto* frontier separating North Korea and Communist China on the one side from South Korea and Formosa on the other. This is the front line of containment in Asia. Already the signature of Mr. Dulles to the mutual defense treaty with South Korea has given notice unequivocally that another attack on South Korea will mean war against the United States. If later on Formosa is given a similar safeguard, there will be one half of Korea and a small piece of China which will have been saved from Communism, and which could not be violently seized without a great war. What political significance these areas may have in the future will depend on what is made of them by their rulers and on the energy, wisdom, and tact with which aid is given to them by the United States.

Now that the guns have stopped firing the contest in East Asia is between ways of life. To turn South Korea and Formosa into "shop-windows" for values alternative to Communism will be no easy task, but it can be done and it must be undertaken if the sacrifices of the Korean war are not to have been made in vain.

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THE SUNDERING OF ISRAEL AND AMERICAN JEWRY

Has the New State Rejected Its Jewish Past?

MAURICE SAMUEL

THE whole disturbing complex of spiritual problems which has emerged for world Jewry with the creation of the Jewish state presented itself to me in sharpest focus in a memorable experience during my last long visit to Israel in the summer of 1952. I sat with a dozen Israeli leaders of public opinion—members of the Knesset, journalists, academicians—and listened to long and earnest discussions of one of Israel's most urgent needs: reinforcements from the Western lands of freedom; and particularly from the foremost of them, the greatest reservoir of Jewish manpower, America.

Here was a bewildering thing: out of five million American Jews not five hundred a year were inspired to throw in their lot with this miracle of the ages, the reborn Jewish state. A trickle of youngsters had joined the pioneers; a handful of businessmen had transferred their activities. There were a few thousand visitors every year, tens of millions of dollars were contributed to the funds, tens of millions invested in the government bonds; countless meetings were held in America, conventions and conferences passed laudatory resolutions—but of a moderately large movement toward *Aretz*—"the Land"—no sign. And many factors called imperatively for Western immigration. There were needed: the leaven of a voluntary migration as offset to the vast refugee influx; the skills of the West to instruct the instructors of the primitive masses of the East; the moral declaration, to Israel and to the world, that the reborn Jewish state was something more than an assembly of refugees. And, as much as anything else, there was needed a counteraction to the threat of Levantinization—the mass assimilation of the Jewish state to the undisciplined pretentiousness, the systematic unthoroughness, which is woven into the backwardness of the Near East.

For two long sessions they discussed the reasons for the failure. They suggested that Israel had not been presented to American Jewry as it should have been; the miracle had been diluted in transmission; the Jewish intellectuals of America had been neglected; in the constant—and understandable—solicitation of gift money and investments for Israel the solicitation of personal commitment had gone by default. A renewal

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EVEN in a world where misunderstanding and recrimination between peoples, even the most friendly and allied, are only too familiar, rifts in sympathy and mutual respect between—of all peoples!—the Israelis and the Jews outside Israel have been peculiarly distressing. MAURICE SAMUEL here embarks on a frank discussion of the situation and its threatening implications. Novelist, critic, and outstanding interpreter of Jewish history and culture, one can think of no American Jew whose pen and voice have over the years meant more for Zionism and the up-building of Israel than his. "The sundering" of which Mr. Samuel here speaks, he considers a two-fold one: between contemporary Israel and the Jewish past, and contemporary Israel and the rest of the Jewish world. In this article he devotes himself to an analysis of these two rifts; in a second, which we will publish next month, he considers how these developing gaps may be bridged. Material for both articles are drawn from Mr. Samuel's forthcoming book on Zionism and Israel, *Level Sunlight*, which is to be published in October by Alfred A. Knopf. Born in 1895 in Rumania, and raised in England, Mr. Samuel lives in New York. Much of his time is spent in lecturing from coast to coast and in sojourns in Israel. His books include *The World of Sholom Aleichem, The Great Hatred, The Prince of the Ghetto, The Gentleman and the Jew,* and most recently a novel, *The Devil That Failed,* his second.

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of effort must be undertaken; the teachers of American Jewry, the leaders of its public opinion, had to be convened, mobilized, thrown into action. The full meaning of Israel had to be conveyed to American Jewish youth.

The longer I listened the clearer it became to me that I was looking into the heart of one of the great deviations in Zionism. These highly intelligent men were concerned with a single idea: the development of Israel. They thought of Jews everywhere else in the world as material for Israel, *and as nothing else*. The central Jewish problem everywhere, as they saw it, was the creation of a will to migrate to Israel. They were grateful, of course, for financial and political aid. But for the sake of those Jews—in America and elsewhere—and not only for the sake of Israel, Jewish education and indoctrination had to point in one direction, migration to the Jewish state.

Not once in the long discussions was it remotely suggested that American Jewry had a destiny, too; that these five million Jews would not dissolve without having made a distinctive contribution to Jewish history comparable with that of Babylonian Jewry, or Spanish and Russian Jewries; that for any foreseeable future there would be two great Jewries, Israel and America, with complementary roles; that it was for Israeli Jewry to be concerned with American Jewry as a continuing and evolving force. And naturally it could occur to no one that this summary dismissal of a great Jewry from the stage of history was itself a symptom of a dimmed inspiration from which no effective appeal could issue.

ONE met it everywhere: sometimes tactfully implied, sometimes flung down bluntly; sometimes as expostulation, sometimes as warning. It might be:

"Why are you American Jews going through the motions of building seminaries, synagogues, schools, centers, universities? Don't you realize that you are assimilating so fast that unless you send us your best today, even they will be lost tomorrow?"

Or else:

"Can you, after what has happened in the last fifteen years, continue calmly with far-reaching plans for yourselves and your children and your grandchildren? Even if we don't accept the extreme view, if we don't talk of a second Hitler episode, this time *not* in Germany, hasn't the first one left you shaken? Isn't it enough for you that the very question should exist? Can you be content to suffer, for the foreseeable future, the equivocal status which attaches to the very word 'Jew'? Can you remain in the midst of the world which even witnessed —let us not say participated in, let us forget the failure to protest—which even witnessed the degradation of the Jewish name and identity?"

But "left"-wing Mapam and Hashomer Hatzair do accept the extreme view. They *know* America is going fascist. They *know* that the fate of European Jewry awaits American Jewry. The quality of their conviction about that which is going to happen almost puts the event in the irrevocable past. "Columbus discovered America, Napoleon lost the battle of Waterloo. America is going fascist and will massacre the Jews. Let them get out: it's now or never."

Which Jews? The five million of them? Practically. How can we get five million, or even two million Jews into Israel in the next ten or fifteen years? When you ask this question you are answered in proverbs and allusions: where there's a will there's a way. We've done the impossible before.

In one manner or another, on one level or another, whether in warning or expostulation, they were all writing off American Jewry, consigning it to history's rubbish heap.

THIS negativism toward world Jewry, this tacit assumption that world Jewry is done for, physically or morally, or both, expresses itself differently on the different levels; and with every group it has its special mixture of motivations.

The leaders of public opinion whose conferences I attended were of middle age or

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beyond. All had been born outside Israel. They had been in the country anywhere from fifteen to fifty years, years of intense experience which had re-centered their personalities. They were passionately concerned with the urgent problem of immigration from the free West. They could not understand this massive reluctance on the part of Western Jewry. It was so obvious to them that Israel alone mattered to the Jewish people and that Israel alone could be relied on, that they blamed themselves for not being able to make it clear to others. They were, moreover, under harassing pressure. Israel *needs* Western Jews and needs them now, and it is every man's illusion that his need ought of itself to create someone's willingness to help him. Therefore they could not think of a destiny for American Jewry. It was an interference—at best a dangerous delay in their planning, at worst a total negation of their faith. So the discussions went on, intelligent, impatient, and baffled.

The young people in Israel, native-born or childhood immigrants, take a simpler view. In their eyes it is evidence of delinquency and decay that an American Jew should not want to settle in Israel. The "Exile" is a uniformly disgraceful thing, in principle if not in actuality. One country may be tolerant of Jews, another may practice discrimination, a third may massacre them; the degree does not affect the quality —it is all *galut*. Exile. And Jews who do not want to leave the Exile when they can, hardly deserve to be received when they must. For these youngsters the notion of a positive destiny for American or any other Diaspora Jewry is not even intelligible. For them no exilic Jewry of the past has had a destiny. The two thousand years of Jewish experience between the crushing of Bar Kochba and the creation of the Republic of Israel were a disreputable episode called "Exile." Jews could not be blamed too much for enduring it when there was no alternative. But that they should choose its continuation now, with freedom theirs for the asking. . . . Again one does not raise the question: "What would you do if all free Jews wanted to come to little Israel?" The fact is, very few of them do. Therefore they are not really Jews any more; the Exile has turned them into something neither Jew nor Gentile.

No distinction is made between gradations of Jewish self-identification, of Jewish knowledge, sympathy, cooperation. Now it is quite true that there are hundreds of thousands of Jews in America and elsewhere who are neither Jews nor Gentiles. But there are hundreds of thousands of Jews who cling to part of their heritage, and hundreds of thousands more who are conscious if imperfect carriers of the Jewish life-view. To the young Israeli these gradations are irrelevant in the face of a refusal to migrate into the Jewish state. He would even say that a pretension to Jewish loyalty, or Jewish learning, whether of a religious or cultural tinge, only makes the case worse. Of course it is good to have Jews throughout the world helping the Jewish state with funds and political influence; but such help would not be necessary if the immigration into Israel did not consist entirely of penniless and broken refugees—that is, if the immigration contained a fair proportion of the Jews of the free and affluent West. So even the philanthropic Jews are only buying themselves out from their primary duty, and their contributions to Israel are bribes to their own conscience. And in any case, if it is a question of philanthropy, the Jews of America are getting away with mere money contributions, while the Jews of Israel must submit to a long regime of the most rigorous austerity—and the end not yet in sight—in order to make room for the newcomers. And again if it is a question of philanthropy, why are the Jews of Israel more responsible for the threatened Jews of Iraq and the Yemen, and the ruined survivors of Europe, than are the Jews of America?

Sense and nonsense are closely interwoven in all of these views. It is true that the miracle of the reborn Jewish state has not been presented to American and other West-

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ern Jewries as it should have been. But that it can be presented as it were from the outside, by enthusiasm, by propaganda, by dramatization, is not true. Such appeals have their place and purpose, but their limitations must be understood. The deeper effect of the rebirth of Israel must work itself out with the simultaneous acquisition, by American Jewry, of its own character, its regionalist form of Judaism. Until that has happened—and it is now in process—personal commitments to Israel, migration, pioneering, will be minimal and symbolic.

It is true that assimilation is at work in American Jewry. But it is equally true that there is a profoundly significant recoil from assimilation. There is a falling away, but there is also a reconcentration.

It is true that even in America and England the word "Jew" still touches off equivocal reactions. But the very heart of the Jewish problem, as it interlocks today with the world problem, is precisely the distinction between the free and totalitarian worlds which the blanket warning ignores. To a tired or confused mind one may appeal easily with these phrases: "The Jews of America feel safe? Well, so did the Jews of Germany. These think that America is 'different'? That's what the others thought about Germany." Thence one deduces: "Because the Jews of Germany were so tragically deceived, the Jews of America will also be tragically deceived." The conclusion ignores the fundamental fact that such a deception implies a world collapse, a world in total ruin. An America thus totalitarian-fascist-minded must meet a totalitarian-Communist-minded Russia in a head-on collision which will obliterate the Jewish problem—and the State of Israel—together with all other human problems.

Something more is implied, of course: namely, that in so far as it relates to Jewish survival, the struggle between East and West is meaningless! The West will go fascist and exterminate the Jews; the East is Communistic, and in Communistic countries there is no reason why Jews should go on existing as a separate people. Such is Mapam's analysis of "fact," though it repudiates the implication of indifference, insisting that it is better—as it is indeed inevitable—that the East should triumph. Yet the amoral implication is unavoidable: in the most fateful decision which has ever faced the human species, Judaism apparently has no stake!

The inexorable unveiling of the anti-Semitic motif in leftist totalitarianism will perhaps introduce new verbalisms into Mapam and Hashomer Hatzair propaganda. Mapam's warnings of American Jewry's impending extermination were muted even before the Prague trials. Some time ago I pointed out to Mapam leaders in Israel that their emissaries to America were defeating their own purposes: looking for pioneers, and for communal encouragement of pioneering to Israel, they developed the theme of America as the prospective graveyard of five million Jews. "You cannot," I said, "move a community to great action by playing its funeral march." The Mapam leaders admitted the pedagogic error, and assured me that it had been corrected. But the fundamental view had not changed. The tactical readjustment on the American scene has had no effect on the general propagandistic strategy. Mapam still concentrates on the death sentence which American fascism has pronounced against American Jewry. It forced itself on me that this furious concentration on America's fascist and anti-Semitic role was a trick to deflect attention from the condition of two to three million Jews behind the Iron Curtain—this, again, still before Prague. Screaming about five million American Jews, Mapam wanted to deafen us to the muted cry of the Jews who were agonizing under the pressure of leftist forcible assimilation. But this forcible assimilation having failed of its objective, and the Communist world now resorting to the physical measures of rightist totalitarianism, Mapam will have to find new rationalizations. But whatever the new mythology, and the new developments in the position of the Jews behind the Iron Curtain, one certainty remains: for Mapam too (and for its own

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special reasons), all of Jewry's future is contracted to the confines of Israel; no framework of reference projects the attention of Israeli Jewry to values other than those it possesses at the moment.

SOMETIMES the nonsense is precipitated out in a heap, and appropriated by a special group. Then we perceive a definitely pathological condition. Such a group, styling itself the "Canaanites," issues a weekly publication called *Aleph*. Their cry is: "What does our government mean by flooding the country with a rabble of refugees who carry the name of Jews? Who is this mob which assumes the right—in which our corrupt officials, for reasons of their own, concur—on the basis of a fiction of kinship, to crowd out the natives? What special business is it of ours that persons listed as 'Jews'—whatever that means—are persecuted somewhere? Many peoples are persecuted in this bad world, but no one asks us to surrender our land, our character, our future, to their need. Much less do we concede their *right* to this territory, or even their right to associate their identity with ours."

In this "Canaanitism" there are overtones of neo-paganism reminiscent of the German hankering for the ancient gods when Ludendorff and Baldur von Schirach were representative figures. But here the gods are the *Baalim* of pre-Judaic Canaan; and one even hears rumors of rites celebrated in "groves and high places," after the manner denounced by the Hebrew prophets thousands of years ago.

This is going native with a vengeance. The "Canaanites" are not, as might be supposed, eighth- or ninth-generation Palestinians. They are the sons and daughters of immigrants. And *they* see themselves as autochthons. *They* are the Canaanites. To them even the refugees whom Moses brought into the country would therefore count as foreigners. Nay, Abraham himself would be an intruder, in flight from Nimrod's religious intolerance. It is all completely mad, of course; and it is confined to an esoteric coterie—the circulation of *Aleph* is five hundred at most. Perhaps there is in it a certain amount of pose. Nevertheless, to this as to all other pathological social phenomena, there is a wider background of susceptibility. Even before the creation of the State of Israel we already had youth associations with names like *Yelide Aretz*—Native Sons. They had their social philosophy—invariably reactionary—and their special attitude toward immigrants, even such as came from choice, and not under compulsion. With these "Mayflower" Jews Zionism had climaxed as a slightly comical, slightly sinister local chauvinism from which world Jewry was completely excluded.

A PHRASE in wide currency among the youth of Israel today is *"Al tekashkesh tzionut,"* which, colloquialism for colloquialism, means: "Don't give me that Zionist claptrap." That Zionist claptrap! If it referred to the windy speeches of Zionist orators, to pretentious idealism and political bombast, it would be a healthy sign. But it refers to something else, namely, to the rebirth of *world* Jewry, to the Jewish state as an organic part of the Jewish ideal, as the effort of the Jewish part of the Jewish people to renew itself. It is an intolerant assertion that the Jewish state is a thing in itself, self-justified, self-explanatory; it is a demand not to be burdened with Jewish history and tradition and larger significances.

It will do us no good to address reproaches and pleas to the youth of Israel; it does not merit the first, will not respond to the second. Its character is sound; if its views are narrow the blame belongs elsewhere, in part to the violence of the struggle which it has sustained, in part to the false values which we of the older generation introduced into its education. To some extent its touchy spiritual isolationism is the passing reflex action of recent excitements; where it is deeper it calls for long-range revaluation of Zionist concepts, or, rather, a return to the original regenerative impulse of Zionism.

This sundering from Diaspora Jewry, this severance of life-transmitting connections, is a pervasive thing. In certain ways, it is most

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pronounced in the kibbutzim, but it is characteristic of Israel as a whole.

It may be defined as the collapse of Zionist perspective. As the range of their responsiveness shrinks, as the seven or eight thousand square miles of their homeland assert a more and more exclusive dominion over their spirit, the Israelis find it progressively harder to lift themselves to new efforts of creation and endurance. There is interaction, of course; the more exhausted they become, the harder it is to push back the limits of perspective. However we apportion the causes, this fact remains central: the Jewish state as a thing in itself, self-justified, self-explanatory, has not the power to move tens of thousands of people to great creative action. And again we may put it conversely: when the renewal of Zionist action will come, it will be accompanied by a reestablishment of the connections, an expansion of responsiveness.

For a Jewish state as a thing in itself is not a Jewish concept at all. It was not so to the teachers of antiquity, who have left their denunciations of it—and of those Jews who nourished it—as the classic and imperishable "literature" of Judaism. It was not so throughout the Jewish Exile; and, in spite of aberrations, it was not so in the time of classic Zionism. Israel's turning away from world Jewry is a turning away from the Prophets' subordination of statism to the Idea which transcends the State. It is therefore a turning away from the sources of Jewish strength. There is a pathetic struggle of self-contradiction in the search of Israeli leaders for a return to the old standards of Zionist idealism within Israel; they have narrowed the vision and expect a wider response; they call on the people to lift itself up but they offer it only the restricted horizon which is visible five feet from ground level.

I have repeatedly used the phrases "isolation from world Jewry," "sundering from world Jewry." But I must also emphasize again the paradoxical fact that no other Jewish community is as sensitive as the Israeli to attacks on other Jewish communities. Leaving out the "Canaanites," whom I cannot understand except as unhinged people whom one studies for their condition, not their views; leaving out the penumbra of their sympathizers; allowing also for the subdued feeling that Jews who suffer in countries which they could have left for Israel deserve their suffering; taking it all in all, Israeli Jewry responds more swiftly, more instinctively, more profoundly, than any other community to manifestations of anti-Semitism anywhere in the world. And yet the response does not disturb the conviction that world Judaism has—and perhaps *ought* to have—no future. Which, then, is the more significant, the more enduring: the sensitivity or the conviction? The answer is not analytical but dynamic; for neither the splitting up of world Jewry, nor its reunification, is an inevitability. The issue waits on developments which self-criticism, understanding, and foresight will help us to control.

THE sundering from world Jewry and world Judaism has another aspect, having to do with time rather than space. Israel is cut off from the past. This will be an astounding assertion to many; for if Israel is anything at all, it is—one would insist—the most remarkable historic instance of the past made present. But it is necessary to point out that while this is a correct description of classic Zionism, it need not be one of Israel.

Less than a decade ago—but the war had kept me away from Israel for some years prior to that—I wrote, in *Harvest in the Desert:* "For the children [who would grow up in the Jewish homeland] Hebrew would be natural in a profound sense. The land into which they would be born had acquired its imperishable name through Hebrew-speaking men and women. The language was one with the land, if we think of that land not merely as random territory but as the theater of the unique utterances of the Bible. Hebrew *could* not be a secondary language to the new generation, if the bond between it and the land was to be

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enduring. And it turned out as the Zionists had planned. The associations which to me, for instance, are a cultural acquisition, are to the children of the Emek, the valley of Jezreel, an immediate experience. I have seen little tots come out of the kindergartens of Nahalal and Ain Charod and Beth Alpha to play in the morning sun, and they have looked up at Mount Gilboa, or at the Carmel range, or at the hills of southern Galilee; and I have heard them clamor, as children do everywhere, for a story. What better stories could their teacher tell them than the one about King Saul and Jonathan and David and the wars against the Philistines (and there was Mount Gilboa, where Saul and Jonathan were killed, right before them); and the one about Elijah and the prophets of Baal and the wicked King Ahab (and there on the other side was Mount Carmel, where the contest took place between Elijah and the false prophets); and the one about the Prophet Jeremiah, trailing through this very valley after the Jewish prisoners being carried into the Babylonian captivity; and all of it told in the language of the record, in Hebrew. The triple cord of people, land, and language was woven into their minds, and a triple cord shall not easily be broken. To these children the Bible is not only sacred; it is the source of their first awareness of their childhood surroundings."

It sounded reasonable and compelling to me ten years ago, and yet its implication is—as I now perceive—only a dangerous half-truth. To begin with, I was at fault in belittling "the associations which are a cultural acquisition." If we think of "cultural acquisition" in the all-important sense of transmitted tradition, father-to-son bond, continuity of spiritual identity, we are close to a definition of civilization itself. Land and language and peoplehood lose their meaning without a fourth strand; and the fourth strand is time.

In the old days, before the embitterment of our relations with the Arabs, I used to go to Palestine by way of Egypt; and I would break the journey there to linger for a few days in the museum of Cairo or at Mena House opposite the pyramids. I never ceased to marvel at the discontinuity of Egyptian life. Records and remains and monuments which attracted visitors from every part of the world were without meaning to the local population. There was simply no connection between the glories of the Pharaonic ages and the spirit of the Egyptian people. There was a reason, of course. It is not the same people; it is not the same language. The Egyptian is an Arab; his roots are in another world; his presence in the land of the Pharaohs is pure accident. There is no lever which, resting on the fulcrum of a common tradition, can enable the past to lift up the present.

But in later years I made my visits to Palestine and Israel via Rome and Athens; and I lingered at these stations, too; particularly at the first, for the sake of a Renaissance novel I was planning. Here the languages of past and present have much in common; one passes easily from Italian to Latin, while there is no passage from Arabic to Coptic. There is a strong strain of the Italian peoples of the Imperial time in the modern Italians, despite intervening admixtures. Moreover, Italian school children study the history of Imperial Rome as their own history; the monuments of the splendid past are more numerous than those of ancient Egypt: its literature, unlike that of the ancient Egyptians, is copious and fascinating, a universal cultural necessity. But between the Rome of Augustus and Marcus Aurelius, of Virgil and Tacitus, and the Rome which swarmed about me, there was no living connection; they were as far from each other as the magnificence of the Foro Romano and the forum of Trajan, at which the ruins hinted, is from the Corso and the Palazzo di Justitia. The Fascist evocation of ancestral greatness was a windy futility. The people I talked to, even the cultivated, did not feel a continuity between themselves and a far-off exalted past. The tumultuous Roman streets and squares stand away from the reminders of antique achieve-

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ment which are inescapably imbedded in them almost as if actively disclaiming kinship.

Even more striking is the sense of discontinuity in Athens. I remember how I stood in the bow of the ship approaching the Piraeus, and saw for the first time the Parthenon and the Lycabettus towering over the still concealed inland city. I thought of Athenians of old returning from a journey, and of ancient Romans making their pilgrimage to the birthplace of Western civilization; and I thought how they, too, must have caught the first glimpse of their destination in these landmarks. But passing through the streets of Athens to the Acropolis, I asked myself how it was possible for these descendants—partial at least—of the most gifted people of all history to be so indifferent to the suggestion of these memorials. It was the question which Byron asked in "The Isles of Greece"; and thousands of others have asked it, too. For though there is much boasting in modern Athens about a glorious past, there is no organic nexus between the glory and its panegyrists. Yet they speak Greek, and are a people, and have inherited the land.

True, their Greek (I am told) is remoter from Plato's than our modern Hebrew is from Isaiah's; as remote as the Italian of modern Rome from the Latin of Virgil. But the triple cord is there, land, people, language, even if the last is slightly frayed. What, then, is lacking?

I can see now that there is lacking the bond of the intermediate generations. There is no channel of filial communication. The fourth strand has been snapped and cannot be rewoven. The past is a legend, not a reality, because the sons did not receive from the fathers the heritage of the grandfathers.

THESE are the two dangers and frustrations in Israel at the present time; the sundering from world Jewry, and the concomitant sundering from historic Jewry.

Partly because they are crushed by burdens which we of the wealthy West do not lighten as we should, partly because of the cyclical decline which characterizes all creative movements, partly because we have committed errors, the Israelis no longer feel themselves to be, as once they did, the expression of the latent will and destiny of the whole Jewish people. Their struggles take place on the limited stage of contemporary Israel. No tide of historic and world-wide significance, the lift of the Jewish people in time and space, carries them today. It may be a cruel thing to suggest, and yet it thrusts itself on the mind, that their special sensitivity with regard to oppression of Jews everywhere is in part a reflex of the feeling: "That human material belongs to us." It is Israel that is wounded and threatened with loss; Israel, and not the Jewish people at large. And so, as they struggle with their moral problems, of discipline, of production, of overconsumption, of doctrinaire rigidity, they become more and more intent on their own salvation, and move toward the isolation which is the enemy of salvation.

To most of the internal problems of Israel there are no purely technical answers. Neither will answers come from party programs strategically reformulated. Both Israel and world Jewry must turn back to the *sources* of Zionist strength, to the *vision* which made the Jewish homeland an instrument, not an end. Even the discovery of good technical ideas depends on mood, and the change of mood now needed must have a common source and purpose in Israeli and world Jewry.

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WHAT IS THE "RIGHT" UP TO?

A Look at Their Record in Congress

MAURICE J. GOLDBLOOM

AT VARIOUS times in the past twenty years, liberals have been overcome with a sense of apprehension lest the United States again fall into the hands of the forces of reaction, all social gains be destroyed or at least undermined, and our traditional freedoms be snatched away. While Franklin Roosevelt lived, many felt that he represented the only real barrier protecting the country against such a fate; after his death, it took some time for them to shift Harry Truman from the role of a reactionary threat to that of a champion of progress and liberty. The Eisenhower victory last November again created an atmosphere of panic in some circles, and there was a feeling that the President was likely to be the von Papen to McCarthy's Hitler.

These fears have so far proved greatly exaggerated. But it would be foolish to deny that there are some extremely reactionary politicians on the loose in Washington and points north, south, and west of that town. A study of the *Congressional Record* will hardly lead any rational person to the conclusion that our lawmakers are all gentlemen of impeccable enlightenment. And the least enlightened among them seem clearly to have the support of powerful pressure groups in the country at large, as well as substantial financial backing from special interests amply supplied with funds. Moreover, they are closely allied with major publishers whose newspapers are among the most widely read in the country. Nor can the eternal vigilance of progressive constituents be depended on to prevent Congressmen from turning the clock back; the issues on which constituents are either adequately informed or deeply concerned are neither many nor, on the whole, questions of basic principle.

YET the fact remains that the statute books bear very little trace of a reactionary trend in recent years. True, there have been no major innovations in social policy since 1937. But despite the control exerted in both houses of Congress by the coalition of right-wing Republicans and Southern conservatives—a control which has been real enough during most of these years, even those when many liberals were for their own reasons ignoring it—there has been little serious retrogression. Indeed, in some fields there has even been significant progress. Social security has been broadened, and will undoubtedly be extended still further. Federal activity in such fields as housing and power-development has continued; its pace has sometimes been drastically reduced by pressure from the right, but there has nevertheless been a net gain, however small. True, these gains are precarious, and they are under constant attack, but they are there.

In foreign policy, new ground has been broken; the United States has undertaken responsibilities and obligations on a scale which would have been inconceivable before 1941. If at times the implementation of

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THE first session of a Republican-organized Congress under a Republican Administration in twenty-two years has come and gone, and the Republic still stands more or less as it stood in the days of Roosevelt and Truman, despite the fears of many liberals that the right would rapidly refashion the country closer to its heart's desire. MAURICE GOLDBLOOM here suggests that the right seems incapable of formulating a coherent political program; and the likelihood is that, in terms of achieving its own aims, its thin record of accomplishment in the first session of Congress under Eisenhower is not likely to be bettered for some time to come. Mr. Goldbloom is a political analyst who contributes frequently to COMMENTARY.

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policy has been hampered by penny-pinching and sniping, its basic lines have not been seriously challenged. The question has not been one of *whether* the United States. should continue to participate in the defense of the free world, politically and materially; it has been one of how large the scale of that participation should be, and to a lesser extent of what conditions should be placed on it and what goals it should set itself.

In these respects, the far right has succeeded in influencing legislation to a degree which has at times threatened the success of policy; sometimes it has succeeded in paralyzing the execution of policy, by imposing specific restrictions or by terrorizing the State Department. But it has not been able to make policy; indeed, it has not really had any policy to offer. (The MacArthur incident is a case in point; few of those who were willing to use him as a weapon against Truman and Acheson had any taste for pressing his specific proposals to a showdown.) Joe McCarthy, to be sure, used Syngman Rhee as an excuse to sound off when the latter threatened to disrupt the truce negotiations; but even Joe did not try to do anything to back Rhee up. In foreign policy the extreme right voices its discontents, it sometimes throws emory dust on the bearings or lets the air out of the tires, but it shows no eagerness at all to take over the steering wheel.

THERE have, of course, been bad laws passed by Congresses under right-wing leadership. In some of them, however, the issues involved had little relation to basic political principles. Thus, the offshore oil question was not one of public versus private exploitation of natural resources; it was simply a dispute over whether the royalties paid by private oil companies should go to the national government for the benefit of the whole country, or to the few states off whose shores oil wells were likely to turn up. The issue was one of interests, not of principles. But it became involved with the general political struggle between left and right because the oil royalties were one of the elements in the complicated and continuous horse-trade which serves the American right as a substitute for ideology.

The one important area in which the right has consistently been able to set policy in recent years has been that of internal security. Here the Smith Act, the McCarran Internal Security Act and the McCarran-Walter Immigration Act, the operation of Congressional investigations, and the conduct of the Federal loyalty and security programs have all borne its unmistakable impress. For in essence this field is a negative one, and it is only in the negative aspect of its activities that the American right has anything approaching a clear program. It knows some of the things it's against—even if it is seldom too clear as to what they mean or how they can be fought effectively. At the same time, this is one of the areas in which American liberals have been most confused; it took many of them a long time to discover that Communism and the Communist movement were not exponents of "twentieth century Americanism," however ardently they might contest with Harry Byrd for Jefferson's ashes, and an even longer time to decide that the problem would not go away if one simply shut one's eyes long enough. Here, in contrast to most questions, the right has had some idea of what it wanted, and most liberals have been almost purely negative in their approach. The result has been that the policy actually adopted—even by President Truman—came from the people who had one, however unsatisfactory and inadequate.

DISCUSSING the failure of the Eisenhower administration to produce the conservative revolution which many of its supporters expected, J. K. Galbraith wrote in COMMENTARY (August 1953) that practical necessities had conquered ideology. This is certainly part of the explanation, particularly in respect to the congeries of innocents whom Mr. Eisenhower kidnapped from General Motors and similar cloistered sanctuaries. But it does not tell the whole story. The Hayek-Hazlitt ideology which Mr. Gal-

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braith cites as that of the Eisenhower crusaders did, indeed, furnish a few slogans to some of them; it scarcely penetrated any deeper than that. He himself mentions that some conservatives filled out its outlines with expanding world trade, and others with a system of protective tariffs. Here precisely is a clue to the real nature of the problem which the right has to solve and cannot.

The problem of the right is that it is composed, not of ideologues or men with a common point of view, but of representatives of interest groups. But these groups are numerous and varied; to some extent they are also unstable. They are partly economic, partly geographical, and partly social and ethnic. Because of the combination of factors involved, they lend themselves neither to simple schematic analysis nor to ready political manipulation.

It has been the typical radical attitude to equate the right with "big business"—the "malefactors of great wealth" of Theodore Roosevelt, the "economic royalists" of Franklin D. It is of course obvious that big business by itself has few votes to cast, and would be hard put to win any elections if left in isolation; despite Mark Hanna's "blocks of five," the American electorate has never been entirely corruptible. But almost as important is the fact that, at least in recent years, American big business has not been a unit on the right. Its sympathies have, on balance, been in that direction. But both Roosevelts had the support of leading industralists and partners in the great banking houses. And even those elements of big business which do support the right are far more apt to be found in its moderate than in its extreme sections. The big money in the 1952 campaign was on the side of Eisenhower, not Taft, let alone MacArthur; indeed, Taft supporters not infrequently engaged in denunciations of Eisenhower as Wall Street's candidate. The center of big business in the United States lies in the North Atlantic states, particularly New York; it would be hard to pretend that this area is the center of American reaction. American big business has so wide a variety of interests that it is seldom so much involved in the immediate aspects of any specific issue as it is in the general stability of the economic and social system. And this stability is not served by policies which tend to produce violent conflicts, domestic or international.

Much further to the right, on the whole, is what might be called "middle business." It is this sector which has in recent years been involved in most of the really violent labor conflicts. Its economic interests are usually parochial, and its point of view narrowly limited both in time and space. Here the outcome of specific issues becomes of engrossing importance; there is little room for maneuver between the upper and nether millstones. And it resents both; perhaps its most eloquent spokesman, Colonel Robert Rutherford McCormick of the Chicago *Tribune*, has no more use for Wall Street Bankers than he has for Labor Bosses. By its nature, this group is not homogeneous even in its interests, and cannot produce a systematic ideology. It includes country bankers who are sound-money men to an extent which makes them distrust everything that has happened in the field of currency and credit control from the passage of the Federal Reserve Act on. It includes also small and medium manufacturers and traders who, whether on the way up or the way out, are constantly pressed for credit and hence constitutionally inclined to inflationary nostrums. And the interests of various industrial and commercial groups also constantly conflict.

THE right also finds many of its recruits in white-collar and professional groups who feel themselves threatened in either their economic or social positions by the growing power of organized labor and the great improvement in the relative economic position of the manual worker. This group can, in times of crisis, be pushed far over to the left—or furnish the basis of a fascist movement. It is probably the most politically unstable of all elements, not only here but in other countries. To some extent the role of this group may be modified by the develop-

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ment of white-collar trade unionism. (In such countries as England, it is brought into closer contact with organized labor, and its social and political attitudes suffer significant modifications, as a result of the existence of a strong cooperative movement. But urban cooperatives do not seem to have much of a future in this country; the supermarket has reduced their potential economic role, while the high mobility of the American urban population has made it difficult for them to achieve a solid social base.) Some white collar groups, such as physicians and real estate agents, also regard government activity in the field of social welfare as a threat to their status; these groups are at present among the most active and extreme elements on the right.

The most solid and permanent reservoir of rightist sentiment is in the South. Here too there is no real homogeneity, but there is the cement of the race question to hold together disparate groups. These include the remnants of the old feudal South, which still survives politically to a greater extent than it does economically. They include the carpetbag industrialists who have come down from the North to exploit the advantages of cheap and docile Southern labor, and the local business communities which have welcomed them and fear their departure if labor should become less cheap or docile. They include large sections of that labor itself, as well as of the rural stock from which it is drawn, motivated by the fear that if the status of the Negro is improved it will be at their expense, socially and perhaps even economically. The South also has its left, but it is usually a hesitant and apologetic left; rarely indeed does it dare to take an unorthodox stand on the race question, yet because of its nation-wide alliances it is a sitting duck for right-wing demagogy centered about that issue.

These groups are the almost irreducible base of American rightism. Their influence is increased beyond their numbers by several factors. Because a high percentage of politicians come from a middle-class milieu, many legislators will consciously or unconsciously give greater weight to the point of view of businessmen and organized professionals than to that of other and more numerous constituents. The over-representation in the Senate of non-metropolitan areas increases the power of the right in that body, and the institutions of seniority and unlimited debate magnifies it still further, especially for purposes of obstruction. Yet businessmen, organized professionals, some of the white-collar workers, and the South are not, by themselves, enough to dominate American politics. Whenever the right is victorious nationally, it is with substantial support from the farm community.

By and large, the American farmer—like his brothers in other parts of the world—is primarily interested in protecting his social and economic status. In times of agricultural prosperity, this makes him tend to resist any major changes, and ally himself with dominant social and economic groups against those who are trying to overthrow them. But when his own position is threatened by a general depression or by unfavorable conditions for his own sector of the economy, he demands that government act quickly to produce a remedy. And in so doing he tends to ally himself with other groups which want increased government intervention in various sectors of the economy. He has, also, certain immediate interests which will usually override any ideological considerations; no distaste for "creeping socialism" will make the farmers who are served by the Rural Electrification Administration support the cause of the private power companies. Thus the right needs the farmer to maintain its power, but it cannot depend on him; he is with it or against it depending on the dominant issues of the moment, the price of his product, and perhaps the length of his memory.

In addition the right today draws a certain amount of support, in places where it is normally weak, from certain ethnic groups which were alienated by the foreign policies of the Roosevelt and Truman administrations. These include especially Americans of German and Italian descent, but also

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those with strong ties to countries which have been subjected to Soviet rule. Rightist strength in these groups will undoubtedly decline as the events which gave rise to it recede into the distance. But some of it will probably remain for a long time to come, if past experience is an accurate guide; there are still many Americans who vote Republican because they are opposed to slavery.

THERE are occasionally things which all these groups regard as harmful to them, but it is seldom that they all regard any particular policy as desirable. And when any group on the right does desire a particular policy it is far more likely to be in terms of that policy's immediate practical implications for itself than of any principled position or central ideological predilection. This is not to say that the right lacks ideologists. It has them—lots of them—but they represent a number of conflicting ideologies, and they supply not a program but an arsenal of slogans from which rightist politicians and businessmen can pick and choose as the occasion demands. (The same thing also happens on the other side of the fence, of course. But I think it is a less serious problem there. The interest groups involved are on the whole larger and more stable, so that their internal conflicts, practical no less than ideological, are less omnipresent. Organized labor today furnishes a permanent left-of-center core; if it has no clear ideology, at least it has a positive program covering a wide area.)

This is a situation which is sometimes convenient for purposes of political maneuvering, particularly in opposition, but is certainly not conducive to the production of a consistent and viable policy. One can almost always find an ideological reason for any particular act when one has an adequately varied stock of ideologies to choose from. Thus, one may oppose TVA in the interests of free enterprise, because it is an unwarranted intervention by government in a field properly reserved to private industry. Or—again in the name of free enterprise—one may support it because it is a blow at Eastern monopolies, helps in the development of small industries, and renders valuable service to that sturdiest of American entrepreneurs—without whom no right-wing victory at the polls is possible—the American farmer. (It may be remembered that the co-sponsor of TVA was the late John Rankin of Mississippi, and that it has had the consistent support of Boss Ed Crump of Memphis, than whom there is probably no more solidly incrusted crustacean in the right wing of the Southern Democratic party.) Or, if the occasion demands, one may change horses in the middle of the Tennessee River, as former Republican National Chairman Brazilla Carroll Reece once did after he had lost his East Tennessee seat in Congress to an independent because of his original opposition to TVA.

Again, one may vote to extend the excess profits tax because it is necessary to keep the deficit as small as possible, in the interest of sound finance. Or one may vote to remove it, because it is a burden on business, a threat to enterprise, and a hindrance to economic progress. (The same, of course, applies to any other tax; one picks one's principles in each case in accordance with the pressures in one's district and the degree of Presidential importunity.) One may vote for a larger Air Force than President Truman asks, because it is necessary to national defense, but in the interests of economy be against increasing it over the lower levels urged by President Eisenhower. One may feel that our nation's safety justifies the expenditure of three-fourths of a billion dollars in military and economic aid to keep the Communists from taking over Formosa and Indo-China, but that we will be threatened with national bankruptcy if we spend more than a tenth of that sum to help in keeping them out of all the rest of Asia. One may feel that the country will be overrun with foreigners and the American standard of living destroyed if one relaxes the restrictions on immigration from Europe, but that it would be a shameful blow at the ranchers of the Southwest if we were to cease importing contract laborers from Mexico or appropriate enough

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money to permit the border patrol to stop the illegal immigration of wetbacks who work at cut rates.

IT SOMETIMES happens that individuals on the right will actually vote on principle against a local pressure; it is rare, however, and may in many cases be explained more accurately in terms of countervailing pressures or deals of one sort or another, rather than of considerations of principle or overall program. Sometimes the individual member of Congress involved succeeds in lulling himself into oblivion, when such conflicts occur, by making a judicious selection of slogans from the collection available to him. Sometimes he simply keeps quiet, votes as he thinks his constituents (or a patronage-dispensing President) desire, and hopes that nobody on the other side will notice. Sometimes, but more rarely, he displays signs of uneasiness. Thus Martin Dies recently made a speech on the floor of the House in which he berated his fellow Texans for forgetting their states-rights principles by rushing to Washington for help when disaster hit them. But he voted for the help.

On the whole, the right appears to be united far more by emotional attitudes than by any integrated theory. And since these emotional attitudes are usually resentments, they do not serve as the basis for an integrated practical program. Moreover, the differences which exist among various sections of the right are very great. Thus most Southern Democrats, however conservative or even reactionary they may be on most issues, have been fairly consistent in their "internationalism"; most Northern Republicans have been just as consistent in giving at least lip-service to the rights of racial minorities.

On other issues, there are very wide variations. Thus if one comes from an urban community, farm subsidies are a threat to the free market, but tariffs are necessary to protect the American standard of living. In a rural area, on the other hand, government intervention to assure the farmer of parity is fine; it is only when crop controls are imposed that free enterprise is threatened. Another instance of the difference between right-wingers from different parts of the country came on the most recent bill to admit refugees and others beyond the quotas. A majority of Republicans, including some generally regarded as very far right indeed, supported this bill in both houses of Congress; a majority of Democrats, almost entirely from the South, voted against it. Aside from the fact that it was an administration measure, which undoubtedly influenced some Republicans who were in doubt, this was due primarily to the geographic distribution of citizens of recent foreign extraction. In the South, they are both rare and rather unwelcome; hence the "internationalist" Southern members of Congress voted to keep them out. On the other hand, many "isolationist" Republican rightists come from districts where large groups of voters are of German or Polish or Italian descent. The isolationism of these voters was in origin largely a protest against *particular* foreign involvements of the United States in and after the war, and it is outweighed by their desire to see more of their "ethnic" brothers admitted to the United States.

INDEED, the variety of issues which confront the United States and the differing emphases which they receive at various times sometimes result in shifting individuals from the "left" to the "right" or vice versa with very little change in their own positions. Alfred E. Smith was a liberal idol when he was Governor of New York because he stood for certain moderate social reforms in a period when the general motto was "let sleeping dogs lie," and because he was the symbol of a fight against the bigotry of the Ku Klux Klan. (At the same time William G. McAdoo, because he was the beneficiary of the Klan's activities, became an object for liberal anathemas despite his close ties with organized labor.) By 1932 the times had changed but Smith had not; the liberals lined up behind Franklin Roosevelt and gleefully applauded the attacks of the Reverend Charles Coughlin on their former hero, while Smith himself accused Roosevelt of setting class

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against class. And Cactus Jack Garner, whose inclinations toward inflation in the agrarian interest made some regard him as a dangerous radical, joined with his mentor William Randolph Hearst in shepherding the former McAdoo men into the Roosevelt camp.

Perhaps the most jarring shifts between left and right came when the conflict between "internationalism" and "isolationism" took the center of the stage away from domestic issues. In the twenties and thirties, no list of liberals in Congress would have been complete without LaFollette, Wheeler, Nye, and Lundeen. In the forties, no liberal blacklist of reactionaries would have been complete without at least the last three; if Young Bob LaFollette never quite became a reactionary in the eyes of either right or left, he nevertheless became a sufficient thorn in the side of interventionist liberals so that they joined with the Communists in the drive against him which resulted in the election of Joe McCarthy to the Senate in 1946. Yet initially, at least, these Senators had not shifted their position on anything; it was the issues and the climate which had changed. Gerald Nye, it is true, did eventually come to stand at the far right of the spectrum on almost all issues where the right-left division could clearly be made; but this may have been simply the reaction of an ideologically unsophisticated politician to the attacks leveled against him from the left. Bob LaFollette, on the other hand, remained a consistent champion of labor, civic rights, and all the other traditional liberal issues. Nor did Burton Wheeler's public position on any of these ever change significantly, although many liberals were unable to mention him except in the same breath with Hitler.

AMERICAN politics is clearly still ideologically unstable. The lack of ideological political parties, the constant alignment and realignment of interest groups, may perhaps be traced to the fact that we have not achieved a type of economic and social stratification which would make one issue or set of issues permanently primary. As long as this is the case, what we will find basic to our right is not issues but a temperament—individuals whose prejudices tend to range them on the side of property rights against human rights, whose sympathies and visions are sufficiently narrow so that they look with a jaundiced eye at any call to interest or bestir themselves in behalf of anything beyond the boundaries of their experience or their constituencies. But this does not make a genuine right, with a consistent ideology and a positive program.

The nearest to such a thing which exists today is the conservative wing of the Democratic party in the South; but its program is based on the past, and has neither the possibility of application on a national scale nor any real relevance. It and its Republican allies are able to dominate the operation of Congress technically, and to exert a veto, but they have nothing of their own to offer. Of all the outstanding right-wing members of Congress, only Pat McCarran and the late Bob Taft have fathered major legislation. McCarran's was purely negative in nature; the Taft-Hartley Act, bad as some of its provisions unquestionably are, is far from being the slave-labor act which some of its opponents call it (trade union membership has increased substantially since its passage), and it is by no means as anti-labor as most of it supporters would have wished. And the other major law which bears Taft's name is the basis of Federal activity in the field of low-rent housing!

The course of America, whether under Democratic or Republican rule, seems likely to continue slowly but steadily in the direction of the welfare state. To this the left is definitely, if too often vaguely and unimaginatively, committed; the right has no alternative to offer. It is likely there will be few spectacular innovations in domestic policy in the near future, for on the left there are indecision, confusion, and disorganization. But, despite temporary hesitations and divagations, the basic course set in the past twenty years will not change. For on the right, ideologically and programmatically, there is a vacuum.

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FLIGHT FROM GOD—AND RETURN

A Modern Commentary on the Book of Jonah

ERNST SIMON

Now the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying,

"Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim against it; for their wickedness is come up before me."

Jonah rose up [all obedience? No] *to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish, from the presence of the Lord.*

THUS begins the book of Jonah, which we will draw upon when, several hours from now, we shall be reading the customary passage from the prophets at afternoon service, but which we now would like to expound with you. For our common study period we shall avail ourselves of the old exegetical *Midrash Jonah* as well as of the Biblical text. At the very outset the former puts the question that irresistibly occurs to all: "Why is Jonah in flight?" We shall seek to answer it but not at the very outset. Another question has prior claim, namely: "Whither and how does this man, this Hebrew prophet, flee from the presence of the Lord? What are the stations of his flight?"

The first station is the amorphous element, the sea, in whose bosom the figures of Creation become indistinguishable. The Midrash hints that perhaps Jonah flees straight into the tempest which has been raging for the two days he has been waiting on the coast of Joppa for a ship. A leaky ship, unable to cope with the mountainous waves, noses about and comes back to port. Jonah boards it, mistaking the vouchsafed postponement of its sailing as a sign of divine sanction of his flight. He sets his mind at ease with the thought that in contrast with earth and heaven, which in Holy Writ are closely bound up with God's Glory ("Heaven echoes forth His glory"; "The Earth is filled with His glory"), the sea furnishes no corresponding ground-text for God's teaching. He is therefore in a great hurry to get aboard, and as zealously bent on flight as Abraham was to obey the Divine command to bind up Isaac: Abraham himself saddled the ass for the journey, and, analogously, Jonah pays the whole fare in advance or, as the Midrash emphasizes, actually buys the ship outright in order, as it were, to flee God's earth for a domain of his own.

THE second station of the flight is Tarshish, Spanish Tarsessos, at the other end of the inhabited world. Jonah wants a remote spot where neither he nor his God are known. To be sure, the Lord God rules there also, but his Revelation is without effect so far away; Jonah harbors the hope that his obligations as a prophet will not be binding on him there. Such is the convincing interpretation placed on this point by Professor Yehezkel Kaufmann in his monumental *History of Jewish Belief*. We might add that Jonah is in flight from the Creation already revealed to one presumably still hidden.

Jonah, however, does not reach the sec-

THIS modern commentary on the book of Jonah was given as a sermon for the Day of Atonement by ERNST SIMON a year ago to the congregation of Emeth v'Emunah in Jerusalem. Regarded as one of our most creative thinkers on Judaism and the problems of continuing the Jewish heritage in the contemporary world, Ernst Simon is Professor of Pedagogy at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and has been a frequent contributor to COMMENTARY. The translation from the German is by Felix Giovanelli.

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ond—and as far as he is concerned, final—station. Such a station would lie on the same plane as coast and sea. But whoever flees God's presence cannot persevere on the old plane of his own being: falling, he must fall deeper and deeper; the direction of flight is necessarily downward. When the tempest is unleashed Jonah, who readily recognizes it as the consequence of his own acts, cannot endure its sight: "He was gone down into the innermost parts of the ship," as far down as possible. Instead of being on the dry land of glory, or on the open sea, he is now enclosed in a man-made structure which completely cuts him off from the view of creation. Later on, in the outskirts of redeemed Nineveh, he will prepare himself another structure, in this case a booth to keep out the sun, which God will supplement with an over-hanging gum tree that Jonah may not be scorched by the sun-drenched exhalation of His grace. The ship's hold, then, is the third station of his flight.

"And he lay, and was fast asleep." This means that Jonah has completely removed himself from the operations of conscience and mental life. Having renounced the visible and audible world, he also wills to take no mental or moral notice of the cries of the seamen, their anxious striving to lighten the ship and save it by jettisoning its cargo. His sleep is a flight.

There, in the very midst of the fourth station of his flight, a second summons reaches him, beginning exactly as did the first with the exhortation: "Arise!" The first time the Lord's voice was intended to wake him up to his prophet's responsibilities, to keep him from sleeping on the job, so to speak—but in vain, as we know. In order to recall him from his spiritual and corporeal sleep (actually a flight), God now resorts to a human voice, that of the shipmaster, whom the Zohar of course interprets as the personification of "Good Impulse."

It suffices for us, in keeping with the text, to view the shipmaster as the representative of responsible, wakeful life when confronted with the fugitive powers of sleep. Like a Dutch uncle, the shipmaster lectures the prophet: "What meanest thou that thou sleepest? Arise, call upon thy God. If so it be that God will think upon us, that we perish not." We shall return later to this "if so it be," this "perhaps," which the heathen seaman addresses to the Jewish prophet. The Midrash points up the shipmaster's address by having him say: "Thou sleepest whilst we stand suspended twixt life and death."

AT THIS point there is a noteworthy lacuna in the narrative. We are not privy to Jonah's answer or to his reaction to the shipmaster's exhortation. Obviously Jonah remains silent and in all likelihood does not stir once from his sleeping posture in order not to have to see the contorted face of the anguished man who is imploring his help. Yet it is not only from him that Jonah withholds an answer. While all the seamen are vainly appealing to their respective gods for help—according to the Midrash representatives of all the seventy pagan peoples were aboard, along with their idols—the heathen captain has called upon Jonah to pray to his, Jonah's own God. But Jonah remains mute. Only his body is now awake—his soul remains inert: he cannot pray. This stubborn silence is the fifth station of his flight from God. His muteness has the consequence of discouraging the seamen altogether from their prayers and obliging them to resort to the magic of lot-casting. The drawing of lots "works"—for magic is indeed the technology of ancient heathendom just as technology is the magic of modern heathendom. Both, practically speaking, are equally effective in their respective spheres of action: the lot is cast to determine "for whose cause this evil is upon us," and it falls on Jonah.

Again he refuses to pray although he probably has a presentiment that even now a repentant prayer from him would be taken as evidence of a return to God. To be sure, he proudly acknowledges his origins: "I am a Hebrew." He also proclaims himself God-fearing: "I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, who hath made the sea and the dry land." But he does not profess love of God, and later we shall see why he does not. Anticipat-

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ing somewhat, one cannot really pray to a God who is merely recognized and feared; so instead, he proposes murder to the mortally terrified heathens: his own. And he invites them to be priests on the sea altar of their cruel gods. "Take me up and cast me forth into the sea, so shall the sea be calm unto you." As he himself persists in remaining still, the sea can be stilled only by the sacrifice of his life. So Jonah is at the point of reaching the sixth station of his flight from God: death, the voluntary death of which his sleep was a prefiguration.

But now something quite remarkable occurs. The pagans recoil from the act proposed. They row as hard as they can to make land. In vain. So they begin to pray to Jonah's God, whom by now they sense as the true God of Creation. Even this proves vain. According to the Midrash—which closely follows the lines traced by the Biblical account without ever changing the direction of its thrust in the slightest—before they finally work Jonah's will, which perforce they consider to be God's, they try every halfway measure possible. "They cast him forth into the sea up to his knees and the sea ceased from her raging; they drew him back up again unto themselves and the sea wrought and was tempestuous against them. They cast him forth into the sea up to his navel and the sea ceased from her raging; and they drew him back up unto themselves and the sea wrought and was tempestuous against them. Until at last they cast him forth altogether." According, again, to the Biblical text, they are repentant and they beg the God to whom they have made sacrifice not to reckon the blood of a man who may be innocent on their heads. Jonah, who had resisted being sent to Nineveh to call it to penitence (a mission whose success he dreads, as we shall see), lives through a floating Nineveh on this heathen ship.

At this point his flight—in all its absurdity and frustration—seems to be finally at an end. The journey from his home to the sea, his mental fixation on the other end of the world, the descent into the hold, his sleep, his stubborn silence, his self-extinction—such have been his six stations. But God, not allowing him really to die, "had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights." How does he spend these days and nights? On this head the Old Testament is silent but the Midrash, ever faithful to its techniques, fills in the gaps. Singled out for emphasis is the fact that even now Jonah does not pray. He still pursues his flight, past the seemingly final station, death, which he has of course failed to reach as a result of God's chastising mercy. We may speak then of a seventh station of his flight, situated beyond death.

The Midrashic interpretation bases itself on the singularity that the Old Testament first employs the masculine form for the word "fish," namely *dag*, and later the feminine form, *daga*. This grammatical anomaly is dramatized, as it were, by the Midrash. Jonah is first swallowed up by a male fish in whose belly he can move about so freely as not to feel circumscribed. The phosphorescent eyes of the sea monster serve as windows opening up for him on the world below. He sees the secrets of Creation: "The great stream out of which issue the waters of Ocean; the path across the Red Sea through which the children of Israel fled; the seven hills on which stand Jerusalem; the keystone of the world where stand and pray the sons of Korah." These grandiose visions of the Midrash suggest the nature of the seventh station of this creature in flight from God's presence.

Jonah is seeking refuge in metaphysical curiosity, in the rapt contemplation of the prehistoric world of myth, in a detachment of himself from all accountability in the realms of belief and action, in a non-accountability which has put even death behind it without yet acknowledging the faith that lies ahead. But there at the "keystone of the world" stand the sons of that Korah whom once the earth had swallowed up even as the sea has engulfed Jonah. And they are praying.

At long last Jonah, too, begins to pray but, to take a cue from the Midrash, he does not

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make the right prayer. Just as his flight caused him to fall deeper and deeper from one station to the next, his return cannot be accomplished at a leap but must take the form of a step-by-step ascent. A rigorous architectonic movement organizes the Book of Jonah, and its Midrashic interpretation, in the polar opposites of Fall and Ascent, Flight and Return. This same organizing movement presides over the repentance of Nineveh, which starts with an initial popular swell and rises from below to engulf the king himself.

Again according to the Midrash, Jonah's return begins with a prayer drawn from the 139th Psalm:

Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?
If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in the nether world, behold, thou art there.
If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;
Even there would thy hand lead me, and thy right hand would hold me.

Despite the fact that this prayer seems grounded on Jonah's own experience, God finds it insufficient. The theoretic acknowledgment that his flight from Him was ill-conceived is not deemed a true return.

So Jonah tries a second time. He sends up a long hymn to God's omniscience: "Thou searchest out the ways of the whole world and thou understandest every heart; the thoughts of all thy creatures have been thy thoughts, and every secret is to thee an open book." But this prayer too is nugatory, utterly wide of the mark. God does not seem to set great store by abstract praise of Himself, even if it contains a real insight into the fact that the Divine Mind prefigures all human discovery and is in fact what enables such discovery. Jonah must learn to pray better than that.

The Midrash has him make a third attempt, this time in the words of Hannah as set down in the second chapter of the First Book of Samuel. In our religious usage, the prayer, at first inaudible, of the simple, pious woman who, imploring the Lord to send her a son, could only move her lips but not make her voice heard, serves as the prophet's text for the First Day of the New Year of our Sacred Calendar. Year after year we celebrate the triumph of Hannah over the incomprehension, the spiritual deafness of the High Priest Eli; he, able to recognize the content of faith only in the traditional formulas in which he has been taught to repose confidence, mistakes her breaking forth into prayer as drunkenness. With us, the religious revolt against ceremonial formula has itself become a ceremony: a hazardous undertaking which must be chanced again and again, and is doomed to miscarry again and again. Similarly, Jonah's prayer miscarries. The Midrash has him pray with Hannah's words, but at the same time he expects too much from them, since they have by now been congealed in ritual: "A man recalled from the dead wilt thou be named—behold, my soul reached even unto death—callest thou me back to life!"

This prayer is near to being the right one, but the very hazard of that nearness makes him falter; he does not stand his ground against its exhalation. He does say quite legitimately: *I*. He is at last speaking of his own need, his own death. That might suffice for one who had never fled God's presence, but for Jonah it avails not. In him there is still the false security of the fallen prophet who is confident he can administer God's word as he might an earthly possession. Even God's Mercy and Grace are not something to which man is entitled by right. Jonah must learn to pray better than that!

His fourth prayer in the Midrash is identical with the closing verse of his prayer in the second chapter of the Book of Jonah. Only now does he finally say: "But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; that which I have vowed I will pay." Following on the three prayers preceding—acknowledgment of the ill-conception of his flight, abstract praise of God, reliance upon God's Grace as something automatically

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guaranteed, each of which marks a stage in his ascent—we witness the final emergence of the Prayer of Return: promise of active obedience. In making this promise, Jonah has found for the first time the voice of love of the Divine: he speaks of thanksgiving.

AT LAST we are in a position to grasp the import of the first question put by the Midrash, already mentioned above, and which we have adopted as our second question: "Why does Jonah flee?" And again the words of the Midrash are instructive if not necessarily final. The purification of Nineveh from evil is represented by the Midrash as the third prophetic commission entrusted to Jonah. It also represents him as having once acted as a successful prophet of good tidings to Jerusalem, and on another occasion as having failed in his capacity as a prophet of woe to that city, where he is now regarded as a false prophet. In the Midrash Jonah reviews his past: "It is not enough that I am called a false prophet in Israel; the peoples of the world will also call me a false prophet." But again it is Yehezkel Kaufmann who has seen and said the decisive thing. Whereas other prophets who flee their divine mission, like Elijah, or refuse to accept it, like Jeremiah, do so because fearing failure, Jonah, uniquely enough, fears success! He fears the success of a summons to penitence that will call forth God's Grace. Jonah is in flight from God's mercy and he courts His sternness. On that account God does not chastise him by His sternness, which would of course confirm Jonah in his purposes, but by His mercy, which puts Jonah in an untenable position and constrains him to return. The Midrash underscores this point with a broad and ingenuous sensuousness. The second fish in which Jonah is finally swallowed up is so confining that he is moved to the right prayer. It is the female *daga*, which teems with maternal life, with thousands of small sea creatures that throng about the captive prophet. The fugitive from God who embraced death, and that metaphysical curiosity which extends past and beyond death, is harassed so much by this proliferation of creaturely life that he is constrained to return.

God's mission to Nineveh is laid upon Jonah a second time—and for the third time Jonah hears the injunction: "Arise!"—this time from God again. But Jonah spends a full day traveling in the huge city before carrying out his mission. We may interpret this fresh lacuna in the Biblical account as signifying a deliberate postponement of the mission. For Jonah had yearned through the long hours, days, and years preceding the full return for a certitude which only a stern God can bestow. But God's love and commiseration depend upon a sign that reads: "Perhaps." We will remember that the heathen shipmaster sought in vain to spell it out for Jonah: "*If so it be* that God will think upon us. . . ." Similarly, the Ninevites say: "*Who knoweth* if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish or not?" Only through love of God can God himself enable us to come to Him. Whoever merely fears God denies himself love of the Divine, makes it impossible for himself to experience it. This was known to Amos, who was probably a contemporary of the historical Jonah to whom our book is ascribed—to Amos who fled neither the High Priest nor God, and left us the teaching: "Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate: it may be that the Lord God of Hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph."

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DUTCHMAN, JEW, PICCANIN

A Story

DAN JACOBSON

WE HAD spent the day on the farm, as we usually did, every Sunday. Rather a dull day it had been, I remember, in April, too cold to go swimming in the river, and there had been nothing much else to do except sit in the car and watch my father as he helped the boys round up the cattle driven down from the veld, and then walk through them, stick in hand, prodding their sides, stopping to discuss at length what to do about the heifer going blind in one eye, or what a pity it was that this miserable beast should be in calf again when what it needed was a long rest. My father could spend hours like that, perfectly happy among the slow red cows and oxen, with the African herd-boy who knew each head of cattle as an individual and respected it as such. And my father prodded, leaned against his stick, screwed his face up against the sun, listened to the herd-boy's comments, and sprained his ankle on one of the rocks that littered the piece of veld where the cattle were gathered.

When he sprained his ankle, my father had had enough. He got back into the car and we set off home, with the herd-boy's children riding with us on the back bumper, as far as the gate. At the gate they jumped off and opened it for us, we passed through, they waved, and we waved back. Now there was just the thirty-mile run home, through Rietpan, sidestepping Dors River, meeting the tarred road to take us to the Boer War Memorial—and so home. My brother was driving, my father and mother sat in front with him, and my sister and I were in the back seat. The first stretch of road was really bad, not a road at all, but a cart track across Rietpan Commonage, a piece of veld that had been grazed to complete nudity by the donkeys of the villagers. A few donkeys, a cow or two, one or two goats: those were generally the sole possessions of the Rietpan villagers, that and a mud-walled house and five irrigated acres. But though Rietpan was poor, it had its location, even poorer, where the black-skinned inhabitants of the village lived. They were conducting some sort of religious rite as we passed the location, and a man held up a cross of plaited twigs. He was wearing a blue cowl on his head. The wind blew all their clothes in bright fluttering rags as they walked. The sun shone bare upon them through the wind.

Inside the car it was dull and dusty, with the Sunday newspapers in a mess on the floor. My sister was knitting. We passed through Rietpan quickly, in a cloud of dust, with a greeting for Major le Roy on his front *stoep* and a pause to give way for someone's sheep. The road between Rietpan and Dors River was better, and my brother increased his speed.

My father looked up from the comic he was reading. He read it with an air of absolute puzzlement: "Who reads these things?" he asked. Then: "Oh, oh, oh, boy, slow down." He placed a hand on my brother's arm. There was a car standing in the middle of the road, and a group of people at the side of the road, looking down at something.

WE THOUGHT it was an accident. It looked like an accident. We prepared ourselves for something horrible. Warily

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DAN JACOBSON was born in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 1929, attended the University of the Witwatersrand, and is now in the stock feed business in Kimberley. An earlier short story of Mr. Jacobson's, "The Box," appeared in our June 1953 issue, and his article, "A White Liberal Trapped by His Prejudices," in our May 1953 issue.

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our car crept up to the other, then drove past it, and stopped.

"What is it?" my sister said shrilly.

"I don't know." We couldn't see. The other car was blocking our view of what the little group was seeing. Our car went forward a few feet. Dear God, it was an accident. The group stood over a little African child, a group of white men and women. A few Africans stood a little way off, looking at what was going on, and saying nothing. The white people were talking to one another. They seemed quite unmoved, but the black child lay still on the ground. I could see its spindly legs like winter branches of a tree, lying still on the ground.

"What is it?" my father called out through the window of the car, and as he did so, one of the white men stooped and picked up the child. The black legs kicked wildly, and a shriek went up from the child. I saw one of the Africans take a pace forward, then fall back. The group turned to their car, one man still carrying the child. And then I saw a strange thing. They were laughing, all of them were laughing. The child still screamed and kicked, and then writhed over in the man's arms, away from the motor car, butting its head into the broad gray-shirted chest, as a child turns into its mother's arms for protection. We saw white face after face, all bared in smiles, and their laughter surrounded the thin screams of the child, until one could no longer believe that what one heard was true—a scream of fear.

"What is it?" my father called again. But no one took any notice. One of the men ran forward and opened the bonnet of the car. We heard him say in Afrikaans, "Come on, put him in," and the child screamed again, awfully.

But we knew now. It wasn't an accident—it was a game. One of the grinning men saw us watching them, and still with his grin, he waved to us that we could go on. They didn't need our help; it wasn't an accident. None of us grinned back at him. He looked away.

"For God's sake, let's go."

"I've had enough of this."

My brother started the car. As we drove off I said, "What dirty swine." I looked through the back window of the car. They had put the child back on the road, one of the men was standing half in his car, the bonnet was down. Apparently the game was breaking up. We hoped that it was our condemnation that had broken it up. Yet there was a faint taste of guilt in each of our mouths that we had just looked our condemnation and not said anything to them, not made a scene in the name of humanity. But we were used to that sort of scene and that sort of guilt. Together they almost make up a way of life.

We had driven on only a short distance when with a roar of wind and a cloud of dust the car passed us. As it whipped past, one of the men in it leaned his head, half his body, out of the window, and shouted something at us. None of us heard what he was shouting; it was lost in the wind and the dust. All we saw was a white shirt and a white face and pair of bright red lips opening and closing grotesquely.

Now, you don't shout insults at my father. My brother and I swore ineffectually at the billows of dust which followed their car, but my father, in a moment, was trembling with rage.

"Chase them," he shouted.

"Don't be mad," my brother said.

"Then stop the car."

"Why? What for?"

"I'll show you why. Stop the car." My brother didn't, so my father leaned over and switched off the ignition key.

My brother lost his temper as the car slowed down and stopped. "All right, take your bloody car," he said, and got out and came in the back, slamming the door behind him.

"Michael, what are you going to do?" my mother asked.

My brother and I were both yelling at my father to leave it, cut it out, forget the whole business, and he was saying "No one shouts at me like that. No one shouts at me like that," as we started again and tore along

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the road. We could see the other car ahead of us, still raising dust. But we were catching up with it. Soon we were in the car's cloud of dust. Small stones struck against the windshield, and we could see very little through the gray murk.

"Michael, you're going to have an accident."

"I am not going to have an accident."

"For God's sake, Dad, let's not have a scene."

"What do you mean, let's not have a scene, when they shout at me like that?"

"You don't even know what he shouted."

"I know well enough what he shouted."

"What did he shout?"

"No one shouts at me like that."

We came to the crossing of the main road to Lyndhurst and the Rietpan-Dors River road. The front car went towards Dors River, so we went that way too, still at a dangerously high speed.

"Michael, you're going to have an accident."

Dors River was about us. J. Wassenaar, *Algemene Handelaar*—General Dealer. There was the station. The road passed J. Wassenaar and then turned round a corner, the hotel, the Crown and Anchor, with two petrol pumps in front. Then there was a house, another, a piece of veld, two more houses, and a last shop. In front of the last shop stood the black Dodge we had been chasing. The people were climbing out of it. One of them, the man in the white shirt, the one who had shouted, saw us coming and stood looking at us with his mouth open.

Again we drew level with the car. Inside our car, everyone with the exception of my father was dreading the scene that we knew was about to follow.

WE STOPPED. My father said: "How dare you shout at me like that?"

Now they were all out of their car. There were six of them, three men and three women. They stood at various points round their car, looking at us.

The young man in the gray shirt said, "What's the matter with you?" He was big and dirty, the one who had been carrying the child. He wore a broad-brimmed hat on the back of his head, and it made his face look round and flabby, under the circling rim of his hat. But he was big and strong, with enormous bare arms folded on his chest. I knew that if it did come to a fight he would be the one to give us the most trouble, and the one who would probably beat us at that. He walked over to our car, arms still folded, contemptuously, and said again: "What's the matter with you?"

But he was speaking English. Was that already a victory for us? He was speaking our language, we weren't speaking his. But he was big, much bigger than any of us as he stood at the driver's window of our car and said: "What's the matter with you?"

My father suddenly blazed out at him. "What sort of a person are you? First you torture a child that's done nothing to you, and then you scream at someone you're passing on the road. Well, let me tell you that I'm not a little Kaffir *piccanin*. You can't do what you like with me. I'll teach you manners before I'm finished with you."

The man said, "How?" He added: "You're too old." And it was true, pitifully true; my father was too old to fight him. He could have killed the old man.

This was the cue for my brother and myself. We climbed out of the car and walked round. The big man wheeled to face us. I saw his muscles tighten under the hair of his arms and I knew that if we were to win this argument it wouldn't be by force. But we stared at each other as though we weren't frightened. He probably wasn't.

My father said: "You people make me sick. You've got no idea how to behave. But if you think you can go round bullying everybody like you bully that Kaffir child you're mistaken." He opened the door of the car as though to come out, and quickly the man darted at it, to slam it on him. My brother moved towards the man with me a little way behind him. My brother said: "No you don't." He was panting, as though he had been running in a race, as he spoke.

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Now, if there was to be a fight, it would be now. But there was no fight, and I did not understand why, as the old man, apparently the father of the two younger ones, came up and said, "You've got no right to talk like that about my people. We weren't doing anything to the *piccanin*." He gestured, almost appealingly.

We stared at him. He said again, "You've got no right to talk like that about my people"—and then I realized that our fear—the fear that we would be called "bloody Jews," the fear which perhaps had kept our mouths closed when we had seen the *piccanin* being tortured—was his fear too. He, the Afrikaner who spoke English to us, felt that my father was sitting in his car and despising him for the race he belonged to, and judging him and his race by what we had seen on the road, and I realized, how happily, that the father did not want to be judged by that act, and did not want his son to fight us, for even if we should fight and his son should beat us, our original and damning judgment would remain, would even be confirmed. He didn't want to beat us, he wanted us to think well of his race, and how could he do that while the *piccanin* screamed with terror and kicked helplessly against his son's arms? He stayed his son's arm, and said, "It was only a bit of fun and you had no right to swear at us."

"Swear at you?" my father said.

"Yes, swear at us," the other son said, coming up. I saw then why his lips were so red. It was lipstick on his mouth. It must have come from the lips of one of the girls who were leaning against the mudguards of the other car, watching the scene. Like his father, this son did not want to fight. He said, "We heard you swearing as you drove off."

"You were the one," my father said, interrupting him. "You were the one who leaned out of the car and shouted." My father looked at him.

He wiped his mouth with his hand. There was another smear of lipstick on his cheekbone. He said, "I shouted at you to mind your own business."

"But we said nothing to you. We didn't like what you were doing, but we didn't say anything to you."

"You said 'Bloody swine.'"

"That's simply not true," my father said.

I said nothing.

"I heard you," the man repeated.

"You couldn't have heard it because no one said it."

And despite this foolish wrangling, the tension remained where it had been all along, where it had been when it had looked as though there was to be a physical fight. The unspoken words lay heavily on our tongues: *Dutchmen, Jews.* But they were never used. The words that usually hasten fights didn't this time—for our fear was theirs; it was almost as though we cooperated with one another to keep the significance of the argument hidden, yet never for a moment forgot it. Had we not been Jews, we might have reproved them more strongly for what they did to the *piccanin*—for kinship in oppression, or fear of oppression, has two sides, one less noble than the other; and had they not been Afrikaners who feared that their reputation was one of brutality, and uncouthness, and oppression—all of which they had confirmed, they feared—they might simply have fought us off. But we were all prevented from fighting, and prevented from peace.

I remember the father saying, "Do you think we would have done anything to that *piccanin*? We aren't mad people. It was just a bit of fun among ourselves."

And the younger son, who did not want to fight, spoke earnestly to me. "You see, this little Native child ran right across our car, in front of our car, and I had to brake like hell not to knock him over. So we thought we'll give him a lesson he'll remember. It's for his own good, too, you know. He'll be a damn sight more careful now. He'll look what's going on before he runs across the road. Perhaps he'll live longer that way." Tentatively, he smiled at me.

The father was saying, "You see that boy there, he goes to university. In Pretoria. Al-

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ready he's in his second-year studies. A university student. Do you think that people like that, university students, gentlemen, educated people, are going to do anything that they'll be ashamed of afterwards? . . . "

I said, "You made a mistake. No one shouted 'Bloody swine.'" What I said was true, but it was a lie, too. In all that squalor it hardly mattered, but I had to add: "But we didn't like what you were doing."

"All right, then, I shouldn't have shouted at you from my car. But it was our business what we were doing with that *piccanin*, especially as we weren't going to hurt him. It was only a bit of sport."

"Not a very nice sport," my mother called out. We seemed to be winning all the way down the line. The big son had moved away and was being ignored by everybody. The other two continued their labored explanations, struggling for English words to express themselves in. Once the father veered towards an aggressive tone, and then, as though remembering the faces in the car, closed and hostile, with the struggling black body in his son's arms, as guilty as blood, he became defensive again.

So a sort of peace did come, and we got back into the car. No one shook hands with anyone, there had been no reconciliation to warrant that. But no blows had been struck and no one had called anyone a bloody Dutchman or a bloody Jew, so everything was as well as could be expected. Better, really, for us, because we still despised the entire family: it is not our fault they misinterpreted it. And they should have known that we were as frightened of them as they were of us. We left them there, outside their whitewashed shop with the house behind it, that looked across the sand road to the railway line and the railway paddock where one chestnut horse was growing thin in transit between two lost farms.

It was a quiet journey home. Everyone was feeling depressed and beaten, though, as I have explained, the victory was ours. But we had all lost, so much, somewhere, farther back, along that dusty road.

POSSESSIONS

DAVID IGNATOW

All day in a circle around you they stand
waiting: car, house, wife, child, job. Your back
turned on one, it jumps you; you fall flat
to the ground, it on top. You leap up to face it,
and the next comes from behind; and all day
you fall down and struggle to get up,
and at night what leaps out as all the others
seem subdued—your bed wrestling to throw you.
Of the host of enemies you let this one win,
you are so tired; only the bed is capable,
and you sink back in its grasp,
and all the others stand around quiet,
somehow satisfied at last.

David Ignatow has been one of the most frequent contributors of poetry to our pages.

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THE "GREAT BOOKS" AND A LIBERAL EDUCATION

Must All Free Men Read Them — Or Be Slaves?

F. R. LEAVIS

D. H. LAWRENCE'S would have been the commentary to have on *The Great Books of the Western World,* and the plan of democratic regeneration through the "Study of the Great Ideas," a study to be pursued with a life-long application and the aid of the *Syntopicon* (Volume I, *Angel to Love;* Volume II, *Man to World*). It is easy to find in his writings very relevant and suggestive things about Ideas, Idealism (and American Idealism in particular), Freedom, and Equality. Opening *Studies in Classic American Literature* I light at once on this, in the chapter on Benjamin Franklin:

> Oh Benjamin! Oh Binjum! You do NOT suck me in any longer.

And why, oh why should the snuff-colored little trap have wanted to take us all in? Why did he do it?

Out of sheer human cussedness, in the first place. We do all like to get things inside a barbed-wire corral. Especially our fellow-men. We love to get them inside the barbed-wire enclosure of FREEDOM, and make 'em work. *"Work, you free jewel, Work!"* shouts the liberator, cracking his whip. I do not choose to be a free democrat. I am absolutely a servant of my own Holy Ghost.

Mr. Robert M. Hutchins in *The Great Conversation* (which explains the plan) addresses the free democrat, conceived as representatively the worker at the assembly line. Work at the assembly line, Mr. Hutchins concedes, tends to be, intellectually and spiritually, neither stimulating nor exalting, but the triumph of industrialization it represents has liberated the free democrat into leisure. Or, rather, it has made it for the first time possible for him to be truly a free democrat. And to be truly a free democrat, Mr. Hutchins insists with stern logic, is an affair of sustained and resolute hard labor. If, as he says, "Work is for the sake of leisure," then leisure, he immediately makes plain, is for the sake of work; for the sake, in fact, of what, for all but a conceivable handful of Leonardo da Vincis (and Members of the Advisory Board, with the Editorial Consultants—among whom I am impressed to see a member of my own university), must be incomparably more exacting and burdensome than what they ordinarily call work.

The logic is inexorable:

> If leisure and political power are a reason for liberal education, then everybody in America now has this reason, and everybody where democracy and industrialization penetrate will ultimately have it. If leisure and political power require this education, everybody in America

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PART of the American faith is that all men must have the opportunity to develop their fullest potentialities, and as a natural outgrowth of that faith it has been felt by many that the values of liberal education, instead of being confined to a limited and selected group, as in European countries, should belong to all citizens of a democracy. Some, going even further, would have it that the wide dissemination of liberal education is an absolute necessity if democracy is to survive at all; out of this belief have come the fifty-four volumes of the "Great Books," published by Encyclopedia Britannica under the editorship of Robert M. Hutchins and Mortimer J. Adler, which offer to the "common man" what these editors feel to be the essential content of Western civilization. F. R. LEAVIS, one of the great figures in criticism in our day, discusses here whether the assumptions behind the Great Books project are sound and whether in any case this list of Great Books or any such list can be taken to embody the core of a liberal education. Mr. Leavis is a Fellow of Downing College at Cambridge University, the author of numerous volumes of criticism, of which the latest is *The Common Pursuit* published in 1952, and the editor of *Scrutiny*. Mr. Leavis's article "The Americanness of American Literature" appeared in our November 1952 issue.

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now requires it, and everybody where democracy and industrialization penetrate will ultimately require it. If the people are not capable of acquiring this education, they should be deprived of political power and probably of leisure. Their uneducated political power is dangerous, and their uneducated leisure is degrading and will be dangerous. If the people are incapable of achieving the education that responsible democratic citizenship demands, then democracy is doomed. Aristotle rightly condemned the mass of mankind to natural slavery and the sooner we set about reversing the trend towards democracy the better it will be for the world.

THE "liberal education" that the people must achieve in order to qualify, not only for leisure, but for exemption from slavery, is to be identified with the program of the Great Books: this assumption, taken as virtually axiomatic, is *of* Mr. Hutchins' logic, which I did not lightly call inexorable.* The Great Books include (among many others) the works of Plato and Aristotle; the *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas Aquinas; the works of Hipparchus, Galen, and Archimedes; the *Enneads* of Plotinus; the works of Pascal; Spinoza's *Ethics;* Huyghens' *Treatise on Light;* Newton's *Mathematical Principles of Natural Knowledge* and *Optics; The Wealth of Nations;* Kant's three *Critiques,* together with four other works by him; Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* and *Philosophy of History;* Marx's *Capital;* Faraday's *Experimental Researches into Electricity;* the works of Freud. . . . Liberal education involves mastering these—and not only these—formidable treatises, together (of course) with Homer, the Greek tragic writers, Lucretius, Vergil, Dante, Shakespeare, *Faust,* and so on; and a "liberal education is the education that everybody ought to have."

"We believe," says Mr. Hutchins, "that it is a gratuitous assumption that anybody can read poetry, but very few can read mathematics." There is no irony here: this is not, as you might suppose, a defense of poetry against a gratuitous assumption; it means that it ought to be possible to assume that the mathematical and scientific classics are accessible to all, and that we must assume it in laying our plans for universal liberal education. "This is not to say that any great book is altogether free from difficulty. As Aristotle remarked, learning is accompanied by pain." So if the free democrat, faced with Pascal's *Correspondence with Fermat on the Theory of Probabilities,* or Newton's *Mathematical Principles,* or Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason,* should feel that, so far as *he* is concerned, the probability of profit is not such as to make his applying himself *here* a good use of his time, the answer is, "Work, you free jewel, work!" One cannot expect to master a great book at one reading; education is a matter of a lifetime; and here, by the way of encouragement, is a ten years' program sketched. One is free to make one's own approach and to arrive at one's own understanding, since these works, "we hold," are intelligible to the ordinary man. "The great books should speak for themselves, and the reader should decide for himself. Great books contain their own aids to reading; that is one reason why they are great."

As for the *Syntopicon,* it "will not interpret any book to the reader; it simply supplies him with suggestions as to how he may conveniently pursue the study of any important topic through the range of Western intellectual history. And reading and understanding great books will give him a standard by which to judge all other books."

I FIND it hard to decide which aspect of the whole extravagant and enormous unreality is the more astonishing; the idea that liberal education is, or should be, or ever has been, *this;* or the fanatical illusion that one may hopefully set out to prove that this, or anything like it, could be made, by dint of example and leadership and exhortation, the people's way of using leisure (or life)—

*To be safe against the charge of misrepresentation I must report that Mr. Hutchins makes this concession: "On the other hand, the conclusion that everybody should have that education which will fit him for responsible democratic citizenship . . . does not require the immediate adoption in any country of universal liberal education."

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or a common way—in America or any country. But it is that illusion which has given the grotesque and solemn escapade of academic idealism its aspect of portentous fact: here are the volumes, expensively produced; the awe-inspiring catalogue of books is clearly no mere catalogue; the moral and the practical support have been abundantly forthcoming. I start, then, by asking myself how an undertaking so utterly uncountenanced by observation and experience can have been entertained to such effect, commanding as it has done the devoted labors of learned minds and the financial backing of men of the world. And it is plain that the extravagance of this unreality of democratic faith is a kind of corollary of those disastrous consequences of "democracy" in education which are reported by Mr. Hutchins:

> The products of American high schools are illiterate, and a degree from a famous college or university is no guarantee that the graduate is in any better case. One of the most remarkable features of American society is that the difference between the "uneducated" and the "educated" is so slight.
>
> The reason for this phenomenon is, of course, that so little education takes place in American educational institutions.

I merely quote Mr. Hutchins. The delicacy of an Englishman's engaging at all in this commentary comes home to me afresh at this point, and I will only say about the facts in question that, going by a good deal of relevant reading and by what I have gathered in talk from American friends and informants, I take Mr. Hutchins to be expressing with extreme severity a dissatisfaction with American education as it is that (among those who may reasonably be said to have opinions) is generally shared, and for which there are good grounds.

In so complex a matter it would be rash for anyone, whether American or foreign, to offer as an adequate explanation any simple account of causes. Nevertheless, when one considers what one has gathered about the problem and the grounds for discouragement facing the American educationist at the university level, it is impossible not to see the trouble as, in essential respects at any rate, an American interpretation of democracy. It is the interpretation assumed as unquestionable by Mr. Hutchins himself. This comes out strikingly in his way of replying to critics of the scheme he advocates:

> Many convinced believers in liberal education attack the idea of liberal education for all on the ground that if we attempt to give liberal education to everybody we shall fail to give it to anybody. They point to the example of the United States, where liberal education has virtually disappeared, and say that this is the inevitable result of taking the dogma of equality of educational opportunity seriously.
>
> The two criticisms I have mentioned come to the same thing: that liberal education is too good for the people. The first group of critics and the second unite in saying that only a few can acquire an education that was best for the best. The difference between the two is in the estimate they place on the importance of the loss of liberal education.
>
> The first group says that, since everybody cannot acquire a liberal education, democracy cannot require that anybody should have it. The second says that, since everybody cannot acquire a liberal education, the attempt to give it to everybody will necessarily result in an inferior education for everybody. The remedy is to separate the few who are capable from the many who are incapable and see to it that the few, at least, receive a liberal education. The rest can be relegated to vocational training and any kind of activity in school that happens to interest them.
>
> The more logical and determined members of this second group of critics will confess that they believe that the great mass of mankind is and of right ought to be condemned to a modern version of natural slavery. Hence there is no use in wasting educational effort upon them.

Mr. Hutchins complicates the point a little by so gratuitously identifying liberal education with the Great Books program. But the unquestioning ease with which he assumes the identity must itself be taken as a mark of the decay in America of the tradition of liberal education. And in that decay it seems plain that the axiom assumed by Mr. Hutchins had a major part; the axiom that it is an offense against democracy to advocate for anybody anything that everybody can't have. And now, answering his

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critics, Mr. Hutchins with emphatic deliberateness advocates his Great Books program as the education for everybody. He has indeed gone further; he has said that, if everybody cannot be proved to be capable of this education, then democracy is doomed.

If Mr. Hutchins is right, then we can have no hope for democracy; for nothing is more certain than that very few persons indeed are capable of making even a plausible show of submission to the regime of the Great Books—even with the aid of the *Syntopicon*. The conclusion, however, that I choose to dwell upon is that, until the "democratic" axiom is dropped, it is a poor lookout for liberal education in America. I won't for the moment argue about the relation of the Great Books and the *Syntopicon* to any intelligent idea of education, but will state my firm belief in this form: it is disastrous to let a country's educational arrangements be determined, or even affected, by the assumption that a high intellectual standard can be attained by more than a small minority. This belief has behind it a very different experience from Mr. Hutchins'; for the history of education in England has not been what he reports of America.

Severe as would be in some contexts the criticisms I should pass on education in my own country, it would be misleading here not to say that English schools are good. I should be ungrateful if I said otherwise, seeing the profit that, as a university "teacher," I get out of working with the undergraduates coming from them. These men, of course, are very highly selected. I will not here try to sketch the system by which the minority of the school-attending population ultimately judged capable of benefiting by university education gets to the university. The essential point I have to make is given in the words "selected" and "minority": the attempt to establish a democratic educational system in Great Britain has gone on the assumption that far from everybody has the capacity to justify his or her presence at a university—if "university" is to mean anything—and that there must consequently be a severe sifting. My own observation and experience (it seems odd to have to say so) assure me that that assumption is well grounded. And I will record my conviction that, for a good long while before the well-known postwar educational reforms associated with the Welfare State, very few in Great Britain capable of justifying their presence at a university had failed to get there.

But I see that I must now, in order to convey the force of what I have to say, supply this informative note: Oxford and Cambridge cream the country; no one who can get into Oxford or Cambridge, and wants to go there, goes anywhere else (at least, this is true of England, and I know that the pull of the ancient English universities on Scotland is very strong). Under the postwar Labor government an attempt was made to "direct," as of right and policy, those for whom the public funds were making university education possible—to direct, that is, to Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Leeds, Sheffield, Bristol, or whatever other university the authorities judged proper, students whom Oxford and Cambridge were willing to admit; but the attempt met with strong resistance and was generally condemned and has been abandoned. So Oxford and Cambridge, as I said, still cream the country.

My point is that there *is* a cream and that it is a very small proportion of the population of university age. Teachers in the provincial universities bear rueful testimony to the fact. When I compare notes with them I find them as a rule very ready to recognize that, in general, by the standards of Oxford and Cambridge, the work in their departments—the education for the guidance of which they have to assume responsibility—is not really at the university level. They hope to find now and then an especially good man who, when they have done all they can for him, can be sent to an ancient university to qualify for an Oxford or Cambridge degree. The disadvantage under which they work is not a condition they

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would propose to remedy by diverting the best material from the ancient universities and sharing it out. They know—they have good reason to know—that the supply is strictly limited, and that only by the actual concentration can standards be maintained, and that unless they are maintained somewhere the cause is lost everywhere.

What I am trying to convey is that in a country in which there has been no such collapse, and no such hiatus in tradition, as Mr. Hutchins reports of American education, it is impossible to question the clear fact: only a minority is capable of advanced intellectual culture. The situation I have briefly sketched amounts to this: Oxford and Cambridge (which, as I have said, cream the country) could become more "open" only by lowering standards, for no other discrimination than what is represented by these now regulates their hospitality. And if democratic equality of opportunity requires that standards should be lowered, then I am against democracy.

At this point I have to confess that by Mr. Hutchins' standards I am not qualified to speak: I have not read most (I think) of the Great Books, and I shall never read them. I know that it would be a waste of my time and energy to try. And yet I had what Mr. Hutchins (to judge by his account of the conditions he is familiar with) would judge a comparatively good education. I left school with a very good start in French and German. I spent a great deal of time as a schoolboy writing Latin proses, some of which were commended by my headmaster, Mr. Ezra Pound's correspondent, Dr. Rouse. I could in those days (so soon left behind!) explain in Greek, observing quantity, stress, and tonic accent (the precise value of which Dr. Rouse knew), that I was late for school because I had a puncture in my back tire. With my Form I read through semi-dramatically the plays of Shakespeare. I worked enough at history (I remember reading, among other things, Trevelyan's *History of the American Revolution*) to win a university scholarship in that subject. At the university I took the Historical Tripos Part I and the English Tripos, both successfully. Then I was able to spend three years in post-graduate research.

It will be plain that I was not, at the beginning of the last paragraph, subsiding into modesty—though it should be equally plain that I have a strong (it is often a painful) sense of my limitations. My aim in these personal notes has been to give due force to the avowal that I have not read the greater number (I suspect) of the Great Books and, knowing it could never be worth my while to make the attempt at working through any such program, shall never make it. Nor can I easily believe that Mr. Hutchins himself, whatever ideal schemes the optimistic zeal of unbridled academic intellectualism may have proposed to him in abstraction, has actually worked through anything like that program, or will seriously give himself to the attempt. He has had, and has, other things to do.

I have just used the phrase "academic intellectualism": that seems to me to describe aptly enough the whole ethos of the Great Books—the Great Books, the Great Ideas, the Great Conversation, and the *Syntopicon*. So extreme a form of academic intellectualism could be found, I think, or could at any rate be taken so seriously, only in America, the favoring conditions being those which I touched on some time ago in these pages* when referring to Mr. Eliot's estimate of Irving Babbitt as against D. H. Lawrence and to the conceptions of Culture, Civilization, and Art represented by Pound's *Cantos* (and his pamphleteering). The conditions are those pointed to by Mr. Hutchins himself in his account of the past century of American education. Where the living tradition has been so weakened the higher culture that should be *of* it becomes a thing apart, insulated from the world of actualities, where "serious" living is done, in a kind of academic other-world. The ideal intellectual culture advocated by the pro-

*See Mr. Leavis's "The Americanness of American Literature" in COMMENTARY for November 1952.

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moters of the Great Books is plainly a monstrous unreality fostered by such conditions. The hypertrophied academic innocence, the utter remoteness from realities, the lack of all sense of how things are and what they *could* be, is proclaimed in the belief that this culture might, and must, be acquired by everybody. Let us not be academic and esoteric—let us bring it into full and living relation with actualities! Because the great bulk of mankind has never had the chance to get liberal education, Mr. Hutchins tells us, it isn't proved that they cannot get it.

The unintelligently intellectualist nature of the academicism is manifested in the belief that *this* is liberal education, and the astonishing ignorance going with the intellectualism in the belief that *this,* or anything like it, was the education of the educated in any past. There must be scores of scholars in America who can provide Mr. Hutchins with compelling corrective notes about the intellectual cultures, and the lines of the liberal educations, of a number of different pasts in which there were powerful educated classes. Always in these pasts there is the strong positive bent, the selective interest, the relation to specific contemporary needs and conditions and to the set of the current in the contemporary movement of life. The type member of the *élite* didn't cover more than a fraction of the reading enjoined on the free democrat by Mr. Hutchins. If he *had* (incredibly) occupied his leisure in the prescribed spirit, that would have meant that, at the "educated" level, there was no living tradition. And where there is no living tradition there is in no real sense a contemporary higher culture and there can hardly be a liberal education.

PERHAPS the case today is not as utterly hopeless—not quite as hopeless—as the Great Books scheme would make it appear, even though such a scheme, fervently advocated with wide and powerful support, suggests that all notion of what a living tradition is like has been lost. But I will, at any rate for the moment, put aside talk about "tradition" (that tricky concept which needs such delicate and positive handling) and make some points that must have occurred to anyone who, as a "teacher," is concerned with liberal education at a place where, in a modern community, liberal education is at least a recognized and institutional concern: a university. Thinking of correctives to academic tendencies, one tells oneself that there will be this mark of a student's having spent his time not without profit: he will leave the university knowing to much better effect that there are renowned works he needn't take as seriously as convention affirms, and others that, though they will repay the right reader's study, are not for him. For an instance of the first class, there is Aristotle's *Poetics,* a treatise prescribed among the Great Books. There may be some point in a student's looking up the *Poetics* when he is going into Tragedy under the guidance of Gilbert Murray, Jane Harrison, Cornford, and the other anthropologizing Hellenists. But the man who leaves the university able to suppose that in the *Poetics* he has studied an illuminating treatise on the foundations of literary criticism has not used his time to real educational profit—even if he has won high academic distinction. It is characteristic of the academic conventionality of the Great Books ethos to endorse the conventional academic standing of the *Poetics.*

I am not of course being foolish enough to question the importance and greatness of Aristotle—which brings me to the second head of the proposition I threw out in the last paragraph. Every educated person must know something about the nature of that importance and greatness, but it doesn't follow that he need have made a study of Aristotle's works, or that it would have been good economy for him to attempt it. Every educated person must know something about Plato, and will undoubtedly have read some of the works, but it doesn't follow that he must have read studiously through the *oeuvre* listed among the Great Books. And when it comes to prescribing that he must also have read the works of St. Thomas Aquinas and Kant and Hegel (I confine

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myself to philosophers—to which, of course, the Great Books are not confined) it is plain beyond question that the promoters of the scheme not only have no notion of the limitations of the ordinary man (or the ordinary member of the intellectually given minority); they have no notion of the nature of a trained mind—or (shall I say) of that kind of training of the powers of thought which must be central to any real education. The student has to learn, as a matter of firm personal possession, the difference between real thinking and what ordinarily passes for that. It is a difficult and painful business, and one that is far from always forwarded—or even proposed—by the academic regime and environment. To the would-be self-improver faced with the Great Books program as something to be seriously attempted, the difference, unless he is a genius or has unusual luck, will never present itself in any challenging form. The difficulty of learning what it is will elude his apprehension in the ardors and endurances, the confident new assaults on Everests of knowledge prescribed for him by Mr. Hutchins. The typical product of that liberal enterprise, persisted in (if one can conceive of persistence on a big enough scale for there to be a typical product), will be that large, never-at-a-loss knowledgeableness, that articulate intellectuality, that happy confidence among large ideas, which condemns the possessor to essential ignorance of the nature of real—that is, of creative—thinking. And that is no real higher education which doesn't bring the student some first-hand experience of creative thinking—enough at any rate for him to know what it is, and to know the worthlessness of mere confident articulate intellectuality.

A man will hardly justify time and energy spent in reading the works of Aristotle (to take one instance of the many presented by the Great Books) unless he is committed to an intensity of sustained frequentation, and to a study also of the works of the relevant specialists, that will make him something of a specialist himself. Mr. Hutchins and his friends, in fact, have not formulated the problem of liberal education as it presents itself today to anyone who proposes really to grapple with it. We are irretrievably committed to specialization, and no man can master all the specialisms. The problem is that of educating a central kind of mind, one that will give the different specialisms a humane center, and civilization a center of consciousness. I will add at once, in order to counteract any false suggestion conveyed by "a central kind of mind," that the hope must be, for those who see the problem for what it is and feel its urgency, to work out different partial solutions at different places.

I MYSELF have suggested, in *Education and the University*, how the opportunities presenting themselves in England at my own university might be taken advantage of for some such partial solution. I mention my book because, while intent on defining principles as sharply as possible, I aim there immediately at practice, and give my scheme in some detail: it is only so, it seems to me, that principle, and the nature of a proposed solution, can be made clear. But here, by the way of emphasizing that my criticism of the Great Books is no mere negative affair, I can only throw out some brief and general indications of the lines on which, I think, experiment should proceed—except that I add: "I *have* explained, in terms bearing directly on practice, precisely what I have in mind—and I have given my hostages."

That liberal education should be centered in the study of creative literature is a proposition that will perhaps meet with general agreement. When I insist that for English-speaking people it must be centered in the literature of the English language I have in mind in the first place the distinctive discipline of intelligence that literary study should be. And here I come to a place where, I know, without a particularity of illustration that is out of the question, I cannot be sure of not being misunderstood. It ought to be possible to insist that there is a real discipline of intelligence proper to the field of literary study without being supposed to be indicating the "New Criticism." But I

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should, I know, be ill advised not to say that what I am thinking of is none of the things commonly associated with that description. The real, disciplined application of intelligence to works of literature is one in which intelligence is not distinguishable from sensibility and essentially involves value judgment. I may indicate the force of my insistence by saying Irving Babbitt, Mr. T. S. Eliot's enormously learned mentor who hadn't the beginnings of intelligence about the literature of his own time, does *not* exemplify the mind that a liberal education would point to as proof of its success.

But the intellectualist inadequacy of the Great Conversation—of that conception of tradition and cultural consciousness and essential human history—comes out most strikingly, perhaps, in Mr. Hutchins' attitude towards American literature of the past; bringing us to another aspect of the central place of literary study in liberal education:

> We thought it no part of our duty to emphasize national contributions, even those of our own country. I omitted Emerson, Whitman, Thoreau and Mark Twain, all very great writers, because I felt that, important as they were, they did not measure up to the other books in the set. They carried forward the Great Conversation, but not in such a way as to be indispensable to the comprehension of it.

Heaven save us from any large supply of the kind of "comprehension" threatened here! It would be the end of all hope of any renewal of life. On that list of names one has to comment that, odd as it is as a list of the "very great" American writers, a study of the writers named, intelligently directed, would provide a better approach in liberal education than any represented by the *Syntopicon*. This is the more so because one of those named is truly a very great writer, and his masterpiece, not unreasonably reputed the greatest American classic, a peculiarly good opening for a study of civilization. Actually *Huckleberry Finn*, though excluded from the first list of the Great Books, was let in later. There is a commentary on it in that series of guidebooks (*Symposia*: five volumes of *A Christian Appraisal*) which appears also to have been an after-thought (and since the commentators are all Roman Catholics, and from other hints, there would seem to be a curious history behind it). The commentator on *Huckleberry Finn* pays as good as no attention to the aspects of the book that make it so peculiarly fitted for the purpose in question. *Huckleberry Finn* exemplifies with great force a kind of relation between "uneducated" living tradition and intellectual culture that the promoters of the Great Books know (one gathers) nothing of; Mark Twain's art brings the folk culture of the frontier into something that is much more than "folk" and belongs to sophisticated literature. We have here (I make a second point) an unrivaled opening into a study of crucial importance for Americans: the part of the frontier in the history of European civilization in America (a study that, properly developed, would throw some light on the significance of the enterprise under review). Further, *Huckleberry Finn* illustrates supremely well how creative literature can provide, for the purposes of liberal education, the best kind of opening into ethical inquiry (and sociological); for the main theme of the book, abstractly stated, is the problem presented by the inescapable need for concrete ethical decisions in a society that, like any "Christian" society, has a complex tradition, and is far from univocal in its ethical imperatives and promptings. That the Great Books expositor should not have noticed this interest (the central one) in a great work of creative literature—presented, that is, in the concrete and presented by a profound student, not of the Great Ideas, but of life—constitutes a piquant comment on the intellectual education advocated (and aptly illustrates the force of the description, "academic intellectualism").

An intelligent study of *Huckleberry Finn*, of course, would go with a study of Mark Twain and Mark Twain's America. And such a study (there is admirable guidance—I am thinking in particular of the work of Mr. Bernard De Voto) offers as good an en-

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try into the study of civilized man, and of the problems of civilized living, as a scheme of liberal education could ask for. It is only when intimately related to living experience that thought and knowledge in general or historical terms can have any vitality—can be anything but merely "intellectual" and academic.

ONE has to note finally that, in his preoccupation with the Great Ideas, the idea of *a literature* seems to have escaped Mr. Hutchins. "We thought it no part of our duty to emphasize national contributions, even those of our country." By "national contributions" Mr. Hutchins means individual and separate Great Books. But *a literature* is a necessary concept, especially for liberal education; and where a country *has* a literature, and a great one, that literature will, in any real liberal education, be very much emphasized: it will be at the center. And America *has* a classical literature, and one the central line of which explores with great subtlety the meaning of American history and the relation of America to Europe: important enough themes for any Western mind. It is a literature that has the advantage of being, while distinctively American, part of the greatest of all literatures. I cannot conceive of an intelligent attempt to solve the problem of liberal education in America that should not make a great deal of that opportunity. I am thinking in particular, of course, of the line of novelists: Fenimore Cooper, Hawthorne, Melville, and Henry James, the line that (and we may associate Mark Twain) may be said to be the distinctively American way back to (or way on from) Shakespeare—Shakespeare who stands as the great presence in the background.

I shall not, I hope, have been taken to be suggesting that liberal education will be merely a matter of literary studies. But the scheme of liberal education for America that assumes the reading of Shakespeare and the reading of Aeschylus (in translation—and "Great books contain their own aids to reading") to be the same kind of thing must be judged to betray an ignorance of the nature of literature; and a scheme that hasn't a sound notion of literature at its center has gone wrong. The syntopical ignorance (we may call it) that knows nothing of the nature of true literary study, or of the idea of *a literature*, goes with the intellectualism of the Great Books scheme. And the intellectualism has as a major aspect the pseudo-democratic optimism that pronounces: *this* is liberal education, and everybody should be capable of it, for it hasn't been proved that he isn't; *this*, or nothing, and the free democrat who doesn't qualify deserves the slavery coming to him. It is pseudo-optimism; offered alternative slaveries, the ordinary man has no real choice, for very few *could* tread that intellectual mill, or make any sustained show of treading it. But actually, of course, it is very far from being *this* or nothing. And of no standard, or higher norm, of liberal education can it be said, it is *this* or nothing. The standard must be maintained somewhere, or everything is lost for the whole community. But if the standard *is* established and maintained, and it is a good and vital one, there will be possibilities of education, and of real participation in the cultural heritage, at many levels. What I have been really saying is that it must be intimately associated with a conception—one related to facts, or one that its servants are validly determined to make so—of higher culture as part of the whole community's tradition of humane life.

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CAN WE STAY JEWS OUTSIDE "THE LAND"?

An Exchange

DAVID BEN GURION & SIMON A. DOLGIN

Los Angeles, California
November 2, 1952

DEAR Mr. Prime Minister:

I take the liberty of writing to you concerning a problem which plagues me constantly since the State of Israel was established. I know that you are too busy to be troubled with correspondence from individuals, especially their personal problems; but this problem is one which you might help solve. Perhaps it has caused you some anxiety.

I live in the Diaspora, in America. Apparently, I, or at least the vast majority of my fellow American Jews, will remain here for a long time to come. We anticipate the larger number of our children and grandchildren continuing as Americans. And that's the problem.

Our grandfathers, yours and mine, had much in common with one another and with Israel, the land. They had a common faith which related them to each other and to the Promised Land. Far from Israel geographically, and remote from the state temporally, they were, nevertheless, bound to the Holy Land. External suffering was not as strong a motivation in yearning for the ancestral soil as the inner, spiritual longing.

We of this generation, too, have had much in common, although we reside in lands far apart. We may not have been bound together in the bond of faith as were our predecessors, but we have faced a common struggle and challenge. In our day Jewry has experienced its most devastating years. Long before Hitler, many of our people realized that Jews would be victims of their neighbors' treachery so long as Israel was homeless, and so long as a more progressive world order did not prevail. That is why you and many others ascended to Palestine, pioneered its neglected soil and made untold sacrifices to build the state. That is why you have espoused a socialist philosophy as embodied in Mapai and the Histadrut.

While the struggles and challenges which prompted you to build Israel did not motivate me in the same fashion—perhaps my experience was not so trying—I have, indeed, developed a tie with Israel. I had tried to give of my energy and finances to the building of the new state. It has meant much to me, not only because it has provided a haven for homeless brethren, but because it has proved to be a fulfilment of one of my dreams

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NO PROBLEM concerns the thinking Jew today more than that of the nature of the new State of Israel—and as a corollary, its relation to himself as the citizen of another state; and there is, besides, Israel's relation to him as an adherent of a common faith and a member of a world community over both of which, he notes with some concern, some Israeli spokesmen tend to make claims of primacy and authority. These relations were the subject of a most interesting recent exchange of letters between Israel's Prime Minister, DAVID BEN GURION, and a Los Angeles rabbi, SIMON A. DOLGIN. The letters are published here as they were written, with only a few unimportant cuts indicated by elliptical marks, and with the original Hebrew of Premier Ben Gurion's letters rendered into English by Rabbi Dolgin himself, who has been authorized to publish the exchange by the Prime Minister. Rabbi Dolgin has officiated at the Beth Jacob West Adams Hebrew Congregation in Los Angeles for the last fourteen years. Born in Chicago in 1915, he studied for the rabbinate at the Hebrew Theological College in Chicago, and possesses a B.S. from the Illinois Institute of Technology. He is a member of the Executive Committee of the Rabbinical Council of America, vice-chairman of the National Advisory Committee of Hapoel Hamizrachi of America, and has contributed to such periodicals as *Orthodox Jewish Life, Jewish Horizon,* and *Jewish Forum.*

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and labors of love. Indeed, I look forward to the day when I may visit, or perhaps settle, in Israel.

Hence, you in Israel and I—or we—in the dispersion have much in common.

WHAT troubles me, however, is our grandchildren—yours in Israel and mine in America. What will they have in common as Jews? They will have no political, economic, or daily social identification with one another. They will be citizens of different lands and will be members of separate societies. You might tell me to teach my grandchildren Hebrew literature, culture, etc. This I shall try to do. But let us be realistic. Hebrew will not be their vernacular. They will read literature in English more freely and be part of the American cultural pattern. If Israel is merely to be a state —just another state, even if a Jewish state— how will it claim the interest of my grandchildren, who will find no fulfilment in the state of Israel, as our grandfathers did, or any answer to a struggle and challenge as we found?

No secular state, with the loftiest social philosophy, has ever held on to those who emigrated from its borders for two or three generations. Those of Swedish origin who have dwelt in America for three generations feel no special kinship with Sweden. Nor do those of France, Germany, or Spain after a few generations. Why, then, should we expect Jewish grandchildren to have any tie with Israel?

Of course you may tell me that I ought to build my family in Israel. Suppose I do; what of the millions of American Jews who will not? Is Israel not responsible for them? Or are they to remain as a separate Jewish group, distinct from the Israelis? Or are they to be doomed to disappearance, as may easily happen if they divorce themselves from the Land of Israel?

Mr. Prime Minister, you must surely realize that building Israel is more than a matter of contemporary expedience or securing the future of Israelis such as your grandchildren. It must also be a matter of boundless significance to world Jewry in generations to come. From indications of history, a secular state cannot fill the need. My grandchildren will have one secular state, and will not feel the need for another.

May I, then, Mr. Prime Minister, submit that Israel must be more than a secular state. It must be more than an answer to cruel struggles and challenges, which I pray my grandchildren may not experience; it must assume the stature it had in our grandfathers' day. It must be the source of a common religious fulfilment which transcends geographic boundaries, political allegiances, economic barriers, and social demarcations, and which can bind our grandchildren together. Torah has related Jews from different lands together through the ages; it must continue to do so in the future. And Israel must prove itself to be the embodiment of Torah. Then, yes, then only, can my grandchild be related to the Holy Land.

For the sake of a united Jewry, for the sake of the fulfilment of our historic destiny, for the sake of God, Israel, and Torah, won't you please use your great good offices to steer the ship of state on a course that will spare all Jews, in and out of the land?

SIMON A. DOLGIN

II

Jerusalem
December 8, 1952

DEAR Mr. Dolgin:

I was unable, to my regret, to answer your letter of November 2, 1952 immediately. I am answering you in Hebrew, since from your questions I assume that this language is not strange to you. . . .

Allow me to say immediately that you posed in your letter one of the central questions of the Jewish people in our day, and you presented the question with unusual clarity, thought, and understanding. And I rejoice over the fact that a Jew who resides in Los Angeles is concerned with a question of this caliber. I doubt whether you will find many Swedish, or Finnish, people, or sons of any other people who live as you in America, whose thoughts are burdened by this

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question, although they too have a "State of Israel" of their own, a bit larger, and established and wealthier. And the very fact that this question concerns American Jews, without troubling American Swedes or Italians, indicates something. . . .

And the question, in the form in which you have presented it, is correct. It is not your personal question, for perhaps you will come to settle in the Land, and it is not, perhaps, the question of this generation but, as you indicated, the question of your grandchildren and our grandchildren. And this question bores to the very depths, and the analysis of the question by you is classic.

As always, it is easier to ask than to answer, although one cannot belittle the value of a correct and penetrating question. In beholding the question, in feeling the fact that a problem exists and the need to seek a solution—there is something of the answer.

I ACCEPT your bewilderment and fear at the idea that the State of Israel might be merely a state. I am, in truth, prepared to accept the State of Israel as a state, and am prepared to offer my life for it, even if this state does not excel in anything special. We have the right to a free and independent existence by virtue of our existence alone, even if we have no historic mission or any moral preeminence. But I do not believe that the Jewish people are like unto all the peoples, for, firstly, I do not believe any people are as "all the peoples." Every nation differs from its neighbor and has something particular, personally characteristic. Secondly—I believe in a fundamental difference between the Jewish people and all other nations. I do not believe in the "chosenness" of the Orthodox, but I do believe in our individuality, and in our great dedication, from the time we came into being and unto this day. . . .

However, I do not accept your words that a "secular state" has no attractive force. I do not know what you mean by the classification of "secular"; is it your intention to say that the State of Israel must be conducted according to the *Shulchan Aruch*? If this is your idea, I oppose the idea in itself on the score of possibility and on that of desirability, and I am certain that a state *like that* will not serve as a bridge between my grandchildren and your grandchildren. For I do not conceive of grandchildren of American Jews cherishing a state that lives according to a *Shulchan Aruch* which is strange to them.

It seems to me that the introduction of the concept "secular" will only becloud the important and vital question which you posed in your letter. Perhaps I am not misconstruing your words when I say that you do not mean "secular" and "religious" in the accepted sense, but you mean to say that for the sake of the unity of the people of Israel (a part of which, you believe, will remain for many years, and perhaps forever, outside the state), the State of Israel must have a *special* manifestation that will have some decisive significance for the Jews of the world in coming generations, as you yourself note in one of the phrases of your letter.

It seems to me that I am not belittling your important letter—and it is truly important!—when I say that the questions in your letter are presented with far greater clarity than the answers. And though I am certain that I understood your questions well, I am not so certain that I understood your answers well. And if I understood them, I do not accept them and I do not agree with them. If, by contrast to a "secular" state, you behold a "religious" state as ideal, and believe that such a state can bind together grandchildren, then I disagree with you. Such a state will as definitely estrange our grandchildren as would "anarchy."

BUT if, in contrast to a "secular" state, you want a state that has a *profound Jewish dedication with universal human overtones*, then I agree, and I believe that *such* will be the State of Israel. After all, classifications alone do not say anything. The principal thing is the content intended by the classification. And you will allow me to renounce completely the concepts of "secular" and "religious," and to tell you what in my opinion

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is likely to preserve the unity of the Jewish people, and what is the dedication of the State of Israel.

I would desire all the Jews to settle in their land. It is possible that this will be essential—if not for all of them, then at least for most of them. But I do not know, and I doubt if anyone knows, if this will occur or not. I am certain that this fact is *possible* and I am certain that it is *desirable*. But I do not know if it is essential, and if it will occur. And the question you asked remains: what will unite our grandchildren here and your grandchildren there? My answer is two things—the State of Israel and the Book of Books.

I do not accept your analogy with the Swedes. We are not Swedes, although it is possible that many Jews will in fact live without any Jewish content or ties. But they will remain Jews. And in order to enrich their Jewish content there is a need for two things, and this is a point where again I disagree with you. From your words it appears that the existence of the people of Israel in the Diaspora, or in America, and their ties with the people of Israel, depend entirely on Israel in its "non-secular" manifestation or in some other way. This is not so. First: it also depends on the Jews who will live outside Israel. And as a foundation for their Jewishness I see, as *of first importance,* the Bible, the Bible in the original. I do not see any reason why you, and other Jews like you who have a Jewish consciousness and are concerned by the questions you put in your letter, should not bequeath your children a knowledge of the Book of Books in the original. This is the source and root of the Jewish nation. The Orthodox Jew will teach the Bible as a book given from Heaven and written entirely by Heaven prior to the creation of the world. The irreligious ("free") Jew will accept the books as an expression of the great Jewish genius in the field of religious and moral thought, and as an exalted human creation like unto which there are not many in world literature. This book will raise the self-esteem of every Jew, give him a historical and moral background and explain to him how and why the State of Israel was established anew.

And the second thing that will serve to cement the unity of the Jewish people will be the State of Israel, which will seek to make concrete in its being the dedication of the prophets, and to become a source of dignity and pride for all the Jews of the world.

D. BEN GURION

III

Los Angeles, Calif.
January 5, 1953

DEAR Mr. Prime Minister:

Needless to say, I was profoundly complimented by the gracious attention which you accorded my letter and by the comprehensive discussion which you wrote me on the problem of the future of Israel and Jewry in the dispersion; for indeed, that is the issue involved in the relationship between my grandchildren and yours. . . .

Yet I must beg your forgiveness for making some observations which still disturb me, for they seem to leave unsolved the basic issue of what will cement the Jewish people the world over together in generations to come. Indeed, I agree that the problem—as you note in your kind letter to me—is not Israel's alone. It will depend very largely on the form of Jewish life in the dispersion. I admit also that the *Shulchan Aruch*—at least as it is limited at present—is not adequate to meet the needs of Israel, or of Jewry elsewhere. No code which is several hundred years old can serve a dynamic world. I cannot envision a Maimonides expecting his code to serve continuously a rapidly unfolding civilization.

Yet I believe that Israel must provide the substance about which Jewry in other lands will revolve. That substance does not appear to be adequately provided by a "secular" state. I must define the term since you question my use of it. By "secular" state, I mean one which is based on the political, economic, social, scientific expression of a people, regardless of how lofty or ethical such expression might be, so long as it is not theologically conceived.

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Therefore I fear that even Israel, fulfilling all the prophetic ideas—as you note in the closing lines of your letter—will not serve as a magnetic force for Jewry if it is a purely secular state. I doubt whether Jews without any ties and content will remain Jews, as you contend. Indeed we are not Swedes, but we are no more human or divine than they. I behold with alarm the pace of assimilation in America, or in more concentrated quarters, the depletion of Zionist ranks. We have no new, young leadership rising to the top as we had thirty years ago.

Nor does the Book of Books in the original, as I am teaching it to my children, seem to be adequate to the task. By what merit can we regard the Bible as a more vital force for Jews than was Egyptian culture . . . or Phoenician and Moabite culture or the "rich and superlative culture of Hellenism" . . . for their respective peoples? Not only must we ask the question in relationship to the future of Jewry, but we must also seek out, I believe, a philosophy of why our Book of Books kept our people viable in dispersion, when the "rich, cultural manifestation which initiated a new era in the history of the *spirit*," could not keep Greece creative under less trying circumstances. We must answer the question of "how" and "why" to your most correct assertion that "even this Greek civilization failed to assimilate the Jewish nation as it had absorbed many other nations in the East." *[Rabbi Dolgin's quotations are from Mr. Ben-Gurion's essay, "Mission and Dedication," which appeared in the 1950 Yearbook of the State of Israel.]* . . .

You write to me and underline that you agree that Israel must be a non-secular state in the sense of a "state of profound Jewish dedication with universal human overtones." Indeed "universal human overtones," as you note in your article, are to be found in Christianity, "this new religion that was dressed in raiments of universality and preached a meek submission, yet when it came into power suppressed and persecuted all who refused to yield to it." We must remember—especially I in the Christian Diaspora—that the Book of Books and prophetic goals are no longer exclusively Jewish. I still miss the unique quality which makes Judaism distinctive as it was in our grandfather's day.

Indeed "Jerusalem and Athens left their mark on the culture of a large part of humanity, but not through their numerical strength and not through their economic and political power." Yet the "spirit and vision" of a glorious Athens did not sustain its people, whereas that of Jerusalem did. And will anyone say that the brilliant thought of a Plato or Aristotle was not worthy of a universal dedication, as was that of the prophets?

I appreciate your attack on those who "split the Jewish soul" with their "unfortunate and miserable doctrine of the wise men of the Diaspora, 'be a Jew in your own tent and a man outside!'" Were these not the "secularists" of Haskalah with their admiration for the prophetic vision of universal equality, for the Book of Books, and even for the land, Israel?

How true are your indications that not only the Jewish person but also the Jewish mind must be redeemed from Galut! Here, again, am I troubled. The very concept of a "mission" for Israel is, I believe, an apologetic remnant of Galut.

In America, we Jews have an objective—similar in quality—which we call "survival." Our American Jewish educators, rabbis, leaders all flaunt "survival" as the great Jewish task. This I believe is a betrayal of our weakness. Healthy individuals, groups, and nations do not worry about "survival." They are concerned about living and creating *now*, not surviving in the future. The person or society on the deathbed is anxious about "survival." Healthy living carries with it, as an accrued dividend, subconsciously, survival.

So, too, must I regard the consciousness of a "mission" as an apologetic weakness. . . .

True, the prophets spoke of the end of days and of messages to all mankind. These, as I view them, were not goals for conscious striving, but natural results promised by the Deity for living His way. In other words,

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Israel was bid to live in God's way. The mission to be attained was God's. Hence I must rebel against any missionary inspiration or justification for Jewry, and I apologize to your Excellency if I am abrupt.

THE secret of the strength of Jewry, as I am coming to understand it, lies in your words that "Jewish genius, from the Prophets to Einstein, did not accept the theory of the duality of matter and spirit, to which a number of people adhere, from the Greeks and Persians to Descartes and his students. Jewish intuition, both religious and scientific, has always believed in a monism of creation and experience." May I humbly add, "the monism of ideas and daily practice." Behind all Jewish living, which you so brilliantly analyze, is, I think, "But because the Lord loved you. . . ." (your quotation from Deuteronomy 7:8), "the hallowing of the Name," and the superior Jewish technique of dynamic, living expression of the ideas of the spirit. Not as Christianity, which beholds missions and ideals, but as a code of behavior apparent in all human relationships and expressions. And that code, an expanding *Shulchan Aruch* and the Book of Books, and the Land of Israel are sustaining forces, "weathering terrific storms," because of a conviction and course of life expression which are ordained by "The Lord loved you. . . ."

Only one challenge, it seems to me, can be made against my assertion. That is: Today we cannot believe in the doctrine of the "chosenness" of Israel. What then? In answer, I fear, we must accept the consequences—at least for Jews in the dispersion—of assimilation as it happened with Alexandrian Jewry (as you discuss it) and countless other Jewish communities. The Book of Books is in the Genizah, but the Jews are gone. Wherever this fundamental faith faltered, and the pattern of meaningful Jewish living disappeared, the Jew and his "mission" have faded.

Dear Mr. Prime Minister: My grandchild and yours is my concern. No book or land will spare them. Only life, distinctive, related Jewish living in Israel and America can turn the tide of disaster. Therefore we must foster intensive Jewish education and appreciation in America. However, we need, apparently, a *Shulchan Aruch* that will work in daily practice (not only in ideas) and that will carry the conviction for its adherents that it is the right way for Jews because God so chose, or because it just is. Such a code, steadily expanding yet founded on age-old Jewish principles, can develop a united, vibrant Jewish people, I hope, inside and outside Israel (as it did for our grandfathers). It will, automatically, be discharging the obligation of a Jewish "mission."

In closing may I request that you forgive me for imposing on you (though I would be grateful for any response—short or long), and for writing in English. Though I read Hebrew, English remains my mother tongue. Even in English—with Hebrew for me limited to being a sacred tongue—do I hope to live a Jewish life.

With deepest appreciation, I am

SIMON A. DOLGIN

IV

Tiberias
January 28, 1953

DEAR Mr. Dolgin:

In your second letter you deepen the questions which you raised in your first, and this very wrestling is a good sign for an American Jew, although I do not know if many American Jews wrestle with these questions as you do. And among your difficult and hard questions you raise also questions of faith and religion. I cannot enter into debate or clarification as to these questions, though I recognize their supreme importance. In this supreme area I am but one of the many bewildered and questioning people, and I will not dare to assume to answer.

But if we will limit ourselves to the questions which are in the realm of human and Jewish history, then Jewish existence, meaning the existence of the Jewish people, depends, according to my deep recognition, on the *realization of Zionism*, meaning the concentration of the Jewish people in its homeland, and in its living a full Jewish life in its own domain. When I say "concentration

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of the Jewish people" I do not mean to be exact and say that all the Jews without exception must flock to the homeland. I do not know if this will be possible or will occur. But I know with certainty that the only complete security for the existence of the people of Israel is its existence in Israel. With this I am not presenting anything new, but am repeating the familiar Zionist credo. But unlike most of the Zionists, I believe that the meaning of Zionism is *life in the Land of Israel*, not affiliation with a Zionist organization. According to my understanding and the faith by which I live, a man is a Zionist if he lives in the Land and educates his children in it and dedicates his life to the building of the Land, the development of Hebrew culture, and the absorption of Jewish immigrants.

There is not herein—and this I confess—an answer to your question: what is the fate of the Jews who will not settle in the Land? The fate of the Jews who will remain in America? And again I must confess that there is no complete and certain positive answer to this question. Whoever presupposes the survival of Jews in the dispersion, and wishes along with it the existence of the Jewish people wherever it might be (and this desire in and of itself is blessed), wishes to maintain the impossible. There is much strength in this desire itself, but it has no way to free itself from inner contradictions. And your very letters are an expression of these contradictions.

But even as a Zionist . . . I cannot free myself from the question of the existence of Judaism in the dispersion. But I confess—in any event I believe—that there is no complete, secure, and certain solution to this question, except for two things: a broadening and ever stronger bond with the State of Israel, and a Hebrew education at whose foundation lies the Bible.

The Bible is not only a religious book as is the Koran or the New Testament. Without doubt the Bible is the foundation of the Jewish faith, but it is more than that: in it is found the source of the people, its supreme expression and its universal and Jewish vision of the future.

There may be various approaches to the Bible: the approach of the religious Jew who believes that this is a book given from Heaven, and all which a scholar has discovered or will discover is already indicated in this book. There is another approach to the Bible: in all its characteristics the Bible cannot be compared to the religious books of other peoples. In the Bible Jewish history lies treasured, the first appearance of our nation on the stage of history, and its development as a nation distinct in its type.

The Bible alone without the State of Israel will not suffice. Just as, according to my belief, Israel alone without the Bible cannot suffice. But this venerable creation—a religious, literary, poetic, and ethical creation—which is woven in the Bible [and] the historical regeneration of the people of Israel and of the spirit of Israel in the homeland of the Bible, are likely to serve as a source of strength to the Jews who do not incorporate in their midst the State of Israel. But this cannot serve as a complete and full solution, because this can be realized only in Israel itself; it can serve but as a contributing cause for the existence of the Jews.

Also the State of Israel, I am certain, will of necessity express the great dedications which found their expression in the Bible; Jews in Israel, like Jews in America, will establish in their midst various religious outlooks which will oppose one another. There will be in our midst believers and "heretics," and also the believers will not all speak one language and the same speech, and nevertheless I am certain that the Jewish individuality which is expressed in the Bible will find expression in the State of Israel. . . .

I know that I have not answered your questions. I confess I am not certain that there is an answer to every question. The test of the answer, I believe is not in the solving of every possible question, but in its actual living in the heart of the one who answers and in his *actual* desire. One answer which is fulfilled with devotion is equivalent to hundreds of penetrating questions that perhaps have no answer at all.

D. Ben Gurion

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My answer was late, because I am now on vacation and am sojourning in the capital of the Lower Galilee.

V

Los Angeles
February 17, 1953

DEAR Mr. Prime Minister:

Once again am I sincerely indebted to you for according my letters kind attention and for extending me the honor of profound and thorough answers. Indeed, I have no intention at the moment to carry on this correspondence beyond its present point.

I feel that we have reached an impasse in thinking because of psychological rather than logical reasons. That is, that I have become attuned to recognize religious motifs as dominant in the theme of Jewish history. I cannot "limit myself only to questions which are in the realm of human and Jewish history" (as you indicate) without feeling that the Jew's conviction of supernatural guidance in history enabled him to preserve the Bible and the Land of Israel. By the same token the Bible and Land (or hope for it) preserved the Jew. Without this firm faith, I cannot recognize Israel's ability to survive, or to find strength in the Book of Books, beyond that "normal" survival strength which is found in other peoples and which has always faltered and failed.

Since you indicate most brilliantly that not all questions need be answered, and that dealing with questions sincerely is as significant as an answer, I trust you will forgive me if I note in your profound statement an answer on the psychological level. That is, that perhaps the background and experience which are yours are not conducive to the acceptance of the religious thesis as dominant in the course of Jewish history, past, present, or future.

Of course, I do not view Jewish religion as an ecclesiastical or church expression. Rather would I view Jewish religion much as you define the *Tanach*: the character determinant of Israel's faith, history, and loftiest expressions. . . . The distinction you make between the Bible and the religious works of other peoples is the distinction I see between Israel's religion and that of others. . . .

In any event, I thank you most sincerely for all your attention and for the reassurance you have afforded me in thinking through a complex Jewish problem. Especially am I grateful for your thoughtfulness in these trying days for Israel. May God give you strength and guidance in these critical times.

SIMON A. DOLGIN

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BROADWAY TAKES REFUGE IN CHILDHOOD

No Adult Drama in Sight

HENRY POPKIN

WE ARE on the threshold of a new Broadway season, but there seems little reason to expect that it will depart in any fundamental way from the pattern of the past season: a pattern of wholesale flight from the reality of our lives. Several times during the past season it was possible to look at the full list of current plays and observe that not one of them pretended to give any kind of recognizable portrait of American life. To make this observation is not necessarily to enthrone the realistic or naturalistic plays that excel in reproducing the surfaces of contemporary life; but the absence of such plays, which have for decades been the staple of our dramatic fare, is unquestionably a curious phenomenon.

And even more curious is the rigid consistency of the themes of most of last season's play. Almost without exception, they have shown the necessity of escaping from stultifying, imprisoning circumstances by some bold, if unlikely, act. Usually there is one central character who is capable of sincere feeling, or of emotional depths that no one around him can appreciate. He is chained to a psychic incompleteness, to childishness, by circumstances or by the apathy of those around him. And he cannot solve his problems; he can only go away or commit suicide or commit murder or retreat into dreams or memories of the past.

In most of the plays this childish dreamer is the character we are asked to admire: that is quite clear, for instance, in such "serious" plays as Tennessee Williams' *Camino Real* and William Inge's *Picnic*. Here the "big kids" are the play's heroes. Only a "trivial" play like Frederick Knott's *Dial M for Murder* can afford to put forth a traditional, common-sense attitude by making its overgrown childlike man a villain, a murderer. Only an unpretentious mystery-writer would be so cruel to childhood: in other circles there seems to be an intellectual obligation to burrow deep into the recollections of childhood and of the past, to live sentimentally, emotionally, and nostalgically.

Perhaps the most striking manifestation of this back-to-the-cradle movement is the fiction of Truman Capote; it is no accident that Capote has lately discovered in the New York theater a new audience for his nostalgia. After an unsuccessful run on Broadway, his dramatized novel, *The Grass Harp*, has been well received at the Circle in the Square in Greenwich Village. Malcolm Cowley has recently written that childhood nostalgia of the sort Capote retails is all the rage in the huge stacks of novels that editors are daily and hourly rejecting. And childishness is the rage, too, in the plays that Broadway producers accept.

TO BE sure, many of Broadway's principal theatrical events belong to another category entirely, the musical production—"play" is getting to be an inexact word for them. The musicals do not pretend to be imitations of life; they improve on life by stylizing it. But perhaps one can build a bridge to the

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THE American theater, HENRY POPKIN tells us, perhaps never outstandingly notable for the maturity of its values, has lately been engaged in wholesale and headlong flight from reality into the world of childish fantasy. Mr. Popkin's most recent previous contribution to COMMENTARY was his article entitled "The Vanishing Jew of Our Popular Culture" (July 1952). Born in Providence, Rhode Island, in 1924, Mr. Popkin studied at Brown University, the University of Michigan, and Harvard, and he is at present a member of the English Department of Brandeis University.

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main theme of this essay by suggesting that this stylization bears some resemblance to the play-acting of children: in the child's conception of an actable character, only the salient traits, the most easily parroted ones, are retained. The same is true of our musical-comedy stylization, which is as fixed and almost as amusing as the Jonsonian comedy of "humours."

If our musical plays have not given us a whole gallery of "humourous" characters, at least they have perfected one archetype, a comic character who seems available for use in any kind of play. He is the tough-talking New Yorker who strains for a gentility of phrase that he can never quite attain. He seems to come equally from Arthur Kober's would-be-genteel Bronx maidens and from Damon Runyon's excessively polite roughnecks, who never speak in the past tense and never use contractions. His rise has been unmarked and unheralded, but this comic character has caught the popular imagination as has no other in our generation. He has even found his way into "serious" plays: Tennessee Williams, in *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *The Rose Tattoo,* has created roughnecks who aspire to a more elegant speech. More recently, we have found the Runyon-Kober archetype in *Guys and Dolls* (based on Runyon's stories), *Wish You Were Here* (based on Kober's earlier play), and John O'Hara's *Pal Joey.*

What characterizes Runyon's and O'Hara's tough guys most of all is an improbable air of aspiration. Joey pretends to an education at "Dartmouth University," and Runyon's gamblers are in constant danger of being reformed by their women or by the Salvation Army. But the loftiest aspiration—the aspiration toward a colorful syntax—is reserved for the toughest characters of all. In *Pal Joey* the fanciest line of talk is put out by the blackmailer Ludlow Lowell, and in *Guys and Dolls* the glibbest "guys" are the Chicago killer Big Jule and his flunkey. The effect is one of incongruity: the ugliest characters use the prettiest words and get the most disarmingly comic effect. This intention succeeds here as elsewhere, for the incongruity of the New York roughneck's glib words and his base intentions has captured the national fancy. But the extraordinary popularity of this characterization should remind us that it really is a type. It amuses, it delights, it deserves all the praise it gets, but it has no genuine relation to reality.

The stylization of *Porgy and Bess* is equally obvious and much more familiar. Everyone knows and no one (well, practically no one) believes DuBose Heyward's myth of the shiftless, happy-go-lucky, pious, superstitious, razor-wielding Negroes of the Old South. To the audience that received *Native Son, On Whitman Avenue,* and *Deep Are the Roots, Porgy and Bess* is a harmless fiction and not a slander on the Negro, since to be a slander it would have to be taken for truth. Once more, stylization provides a holiday from real life and real people.

STYLIZED characterization is one refuge from reality; costume drama is another, especially if it is costume drama pretending to be something else. Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* is nominally about the Salem witch trials, but it is a matter of general agreement that this play is actually concerned with the trials and Congressional investigations of our own day. For most men of good will, the public issues of our time are sadly mixed. Neither the professional martyrs nor the professional Communist-hunters have consistently remained heroic figures. Occasionally, there is an innocent victim and sometimes a scrupulous accuser, but the real scene-stealers inspire no great warmth or sympathy. What Arthur Miller has done is to indulge a wish for clarity by simplification, creating a world in which the McCarthys are still McCarthys yet the Rosenbergs are no longer accused of espionage but rather of the unlikely crime of witchcraft. No longer need we entertain any embarrassing fears as to whether the accused actually dealt with some real Prince of Darkness. And if we need some symbolic parallel to their real 20th-century guilt, we can have that, too: Miller's John Proctor has committed the irrelevant sin of adultery, and he is being accused by a jealous woman; this fur-

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nishes the shadow of a morally complicated situation without the substance. Thus *The Crucible,* widely hailed as the most "timely" play of the season, must also be classified as a dream-play. It is a great feeling, this luxuriating in simple black-and-white issues, but it is purchased only at the price of flight into the 17th century.

The Spewacks' *My Three Angels* offers an equally fanciful solution. Here we observe a family that faces a perplexing difficulty—how to forestall merciless creditors who insist on having a look at the books. The answer is simple—have some good angels appear to assassinate the creditors. The angels are as unreal and as incongruous as Ludlow Lowell and Big Jule; they are pleasant, reasonable men who happen, quite inconceivably, to be convicts on Devil's Island. Indeed, everything that happens here is only further evidence of the pure impossibility of the proceedings. The angelic identifications are supplied in full abundance, and they have the effect of suggesting that such a solution as this—or, in fact, any solution—to the real troubles of the world is as unlikely as an angelic visitation. In true angelic fashion, these three Devil's Island angels make their first entrance from above, where they have been repairing the roof. (This was a great season for entrances through the ceiling.) Their ministrations on behalf of their troubled friends invariably inspire analogies with divine interventions: "Praise the Lord from whom all blessings flow," we are told, and "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away," when one of the villains is hastened to his grave.

Such plays as these merely reject reality or thumb a nose at it. Other plays of the season made bolder recommendations of flight into an unknown, quixotic fantasy. William Inge and Tennessee Williams, who share with Arthur Miller the distinction of being regarded as our most promising playwrights, both enlisted themselves on the side of sentiment—for Williams this is one of several re-enlistments—in a world of conventionality and cynicism.

Hal Carter of Mr. Inge's *Picnic* comes out of nowhere to preach the gospel of love, of glory, of impractical individualism, footloose and footless, and he wins the prettiest girl in town away from the richest boy in town. All that seems substantial and real about Hal Carter is just what we can see—his physique, unveiled through most of the play; everything else is no more than a loud noise—his boasts of sexual adventures, of diving championships, of ventures in the oil business. But Hal's greatest asset is precisely his matchless unreliability. The girl must choose Hal because he is unknown and, so far as he is known, unstable. Curiously, it was reported that the ending of the play was changed out of town, that originally Inge ended *Picnic* without permitting the girl to follow Hal to Tulsa; I take it that the dramatist found out the iron strength of our stage conventions. This is predestination with a vengeance; a stage heroine is doomed, inevitably, to marry the poor boy whom she has just met. This heroine's mother did it in her time, and surely the daughter of the next generation will do it in time to come, if she happens to be a character in a Broadway play.

Exactly the same sort of decision was exhibited in another of the season's plays, Vina Delmar's *Midsummer.* Here the chief character is torn between being a high-school teacher or a vaudeville comedian. Miss Delmar tries out both endings (as Inge did by altering his ending on the road) by having her heroine prepare first for one life and then for another, but no one who has seen *Picnic* will have any trouble predicting the outcome of *Midsummer*: the little white house and the placid domesticity of the teacher's life must be rejected in favor of the romantic, uncertain, happy-go-lucky way of the actor.

In *Camino Real,* Tennessee Williams transmits his sentiments about sentiment more abstractly but no less doggedly. Here we follow one Kilroy who has arrived in a cruel, nameless country where the word "brother" is forbidden, where he must discard his mementoes of past pugilistic glory and become a "patsy," a professional victim,

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fully aware of the nightmare of present reality. Kilroy loses his golden gloves and his championship belt, and he learns the folly of responding to that sweetest of all words, "champ." But he ends up victorious by joining the futile pilgrimage of Don Quixote, and we are told that the violets in the mountains have broken through the rocks. Williams' violets have a way of pulverizing their rocks—but why should they not? They are his violets and his rocks.

To be sure, the rocks are rugged enough in *Camino Real*: the meaningless cruelty of this (evidently) Latin American community, the unspeakable indignities visited upon our Everyman Kilroy, the arbitrary violence of the burst of gunfire, the sinister threat of the ubiquitous street-cleaners who wait to cart away the dead. Who can hope or dream in such a world? But it is precisely because it is so arbitrary, so violent, so brutal that this world has been created, and the brave, sentimental souls of Casanova, Camille, Byron, Don Quixote, and Kilroy have been created, or resurrected, to inhabit it. The authors of *Picnic* and *Midsummer* may measure out their unfriendly circumstances with coffee spoons, but Williams uses a ladle. And the moral is all the more strident: "Be Quixote; be quixotic."

OTHER plays of the season call for a collective treatment. They provide variations on the same theme. All seem to examine a real problem—the plight of the emotionally maladjusted person, particularly the person whose sexual drives are too strong or too weak for him to be at ease in society. The plays are uniformly on the side of love, but they can offer no solution except suicide, murder, escape into dreams, or flight to another country. Hester Collyer of Terence Rattigan's *The Deep Blue Sea* can find no male counterpart capable of her emotional depths; neither her affectionate but shallow husband nor her even shallower playboy-lover can give her the love she needs. In contrast with this pathetic picture, George Axelrod, in *The Seven Year Itch,* offers a comic portrait of a man whose emotional ambitions are limitless but whom society has kept in check for the duration of a seven-year marriage. Similarly, Leona Samish of Arthur Laurents' *The Time of the Cuckoo* has, in her career as a super-efficient secretary, neglected her career as a woman. Her recourse is to seek romance in Italy, for a large measure of her difficulty rests in the fact that she has the misfortune to be an American. On the other hand, Geoffrey Hawke's trouble, in Moss Hart's *The Climate of Eden,* is that he is a European, the product of a tradition-ridden civilization. Another play presents the complete emotional cripple who is completely satisfied with his emotional atrophy and strives only to make it permanent: Tony Wendice, the would-be killer of *Dial M for Murder.* Each of these people is restricted, inhibited, practically imprisoned; each play but the last records a desperate attempt to escape.

What these emotional deficients have in common is their childishness. They want to be children, and they show it, for one thing, by a somewhat nostalgic preoccupation with games and sports. We have remarked that Williams' Kilroy lives in the aura of his boxing championship and Inge's Hal Carter in the glory of his achievements as a football player. The murderous husband of *Dial M for Murder* is a retired tennis player whose triumphs are continually called to our attention by the silver cups that line his shelves. He, too, prefers to live in the past with his tennis victories. His addiction to stag parties seems intended as one of several symptoms of an aversion to facing his adult role as a husband. Similarly, the shallow lover of *The Deep Blue Sea* makes golf his full-time activity and dreams of his past glory as an RAF flier and a test pilot, two typical goals of childish aspiration. Childish in other matters as well, he continues to use RAF slang and to favor his male companions. On the other hand, the comic hero of *The Seven Year Itch* has childishness thrust upon him. We find him living in an enforced bachelorhood while his wife is away; he does not play tennis or golf, but, as the curtain rises, he makes his obeisance to the world

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of sports by listening to a baseball game on the radio. His wife has enjoined upon him a distinctive stigma of childhood by forbidding him to smoke or drink; he is reduced to sipping raspberry soda through a straw.

Occasionally the playwright employs adult children to set off the juvenility of his childish adults. *The Climate of Eden* provides one instance, but *The Time of the Cuckoo* is more emphatic: Leona Samish is forever being shocked by the sophistication of her ten-year-old guide, who swears, arranges romantic rendezvous in gondolas, and generally takes theft and adultery in his stride. Appropriately, the principal American characters, who are often referred to as "greedy children," are younger than the Europeans; the European head-start of centuries seems in a sense symbolized by this specific seniority in years. And, in addition, although both Americans and Italians might be expected to have language difficulties, it is always the Americans' linguistic troubles we are reminded of: like children, they are once more learning to speak, making mistakes, showing joy at the mastery of new words.

Such are the problems. As for solutions—you can always kill yourself or your tormentors. In *The Deep Blue Sea,* Hester is trying to commit suicide as the play begins, and she is dissuaded from a second attempt only by a very hasty and unconvincing compromise with life. The tennis-playing husband of *Dial M for Murder* plots his wife's death, ostensibly because he wants her money, but we may suspect that he is motivated also by an awareness of his inadequacy as a man. *The Seven Year Itch* toys with the possibility of murder. The subject is first broached by a psychiatrist, Dr. Brubaker, who describes his own "strong unconscious desire to murder my wife," adding that he has no actual wish "to do the good woman any bodily harm." Later, the play's principal character dreams that his wife shoots him upon learning of his infidelity. One way or another, a gun looks like a fairly satisfactory aid in escaping from a dilemma.

If there is nobody to kill, go away. This advice is especially suited to those who suffer from spiritual emptiness and long to be filled. Emotional hungers, loneliness, instability are taken to be merely features of the local scene; fulfillment lies beyond the sea. Leona Samish seeks it in Italy but she finds she is hopelessly childish before the warm-hearted, warm-blooded natives; she cannot accommodate herself to this freer, coarser world. Like two other recent plays, *The Grand Tour* and *In Any Language, The Time of the Cuckoo* seems to be asking, "If Ingrid Bergman could do it, why can't we?" And the same answer is heard in all three plays: "I don't know why, but you can't."

The great example of "going away" is Moss Hart's *The Climate of Eden.* In the Reverend Gerald Harmston's little settlement in British Guiana, everyone goes about his private quest for the Kingdom of Heaven, destroying every European "taboo" in sight and yet doing it almost perfunctorily, with a disarming tranquillity. To Geoffrey Hawke, a harried refugee from European neuroses, this haven is at first as frightening as Italy to Leona Samish. Still, Hawke manages to adjust, to find an alternative to the real world in this free-wheeling Utopia. He is evidently plagued, however, by the original sin of belonging to the civilized world, for the parson tells his daughter: "This is not a way of life for him, my dear. Not forever. He thinks so now—but it isn't. . . . Our way of living is not life, Olivia—it's just a way of looking at life." But everything possible has been done to make "civilized" life look pallid and restrictive in comparison to Reverend Harmsworth's green paradise. These last qualifying words do not alter the picture. The climate of never-never land is much more pleasant than ours.

Even if you cannot take passage, no one can stop you from dreaming. *The Seven Year Itch* offers a series of wish-fulfillment dreams, taken from the troubled imagination of a man who lives in dread of what "People" will say. At work, he plans bosomy covers and sexy titles for pocket books; at

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home, he has been a model of fidelity for seven years. What is more natural than for his dreams to embody all the sexual cravings he had denied? He dreams out both his hopes and fears, and at last, after imagining a romance with the pretty girl upstairs, he actually has one—or does he? He tries to kiss her, takes her to dinner, and is finally bidden good night. And that would seem to conclude this abortive affair. Then the girl re-enters by a sort of trap-door, like the Spewacks' three angels, and, as the conventional phrase has it, she gives herself to him. Now, the existence of the trap-door has been "planted" well in advance, and yet the very fact of its use makes the events that follow a little less than real. I am reminded of a conversation I overheard many years ago when I was seeing a movie version of *A Christmas Carol*. The couple behind me were speculating as to the reality of one of the Christmas Spirits, who had just left by the window. My neighbor remarked: "If the window closes, it's only a dream; the ghost isn't real." Whereupon the window slammed shut. The same principle applies in *The Seven Year Itch*. If on this occasion the girl had come through the door, as she does in all her undeniably real appearances, it would have been possible to believe in the events that followed, but her coming through the ceiling lends an unmistakable touch of fantasy. What would you think if a pretty girl came through *your* ceiling? Precisely! Surely this is no more than one dream following another. The play's hero first has some less spectacular, less convincing dreams of romance; then, so to speak, he turns over and dreams on the other side, this time producing a vision that is much more exciting and even more convincing. This is enough to solve his problem; he is able even to face the prospect of seeing his wife again.

ALL that remains is to wonder *why* this motif of flight so dominates the recent theater and the rest of our popular arts. Why are we always in flight for the solace of sentiment, childhood, and the world of dreams? One likely answer could be found on the front page of any newspaper. I don't mean to say, with Arthur Miller, that the trouble is the shadow of McCarthy over the land. No, the trouble is McCarthy and everything else. We live with the atomic bomb and under a permanent threat of war. Who wouldn't rather be eight years old?

This answer may be far too easy. There are always advantages in being eight years old. The point is that the desire to be eight years old is no advantage to a dramatist if he wants to write adult drama.

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FROM THE AMERICAN SCENE

THE STORY OF JOSEF NEUBERGER

Autobiography of a First-Generation American

SYLVIA ROTHCHILD

My Grandfather

WHILE searching for some old books in our attic, one afternoon, I found a crumbling prayer book, loosely wrapped in brown paper. A mouse had nibbled at the wrappings and I opened it, planning to wrap it more securely. In the middle of the book I found a small notebook, its pages yellow, the ink faded a pale green. In the middle of the first page was written, *"Dos Bashreibung Fun Mein Yugent."* Underneath it was the signature "Josef Neuberger." In smaller letters at the very bottom of the page was written, "Blessed is the Name, Adonoi is God." The pages of the notebook were densely covered with tiny Hebrew letters. The words were a mixture of Hebrew, Yiddish, and German. It took several weeks before I could understand the writing. The *gimel* that made the g sound, the *mem* that made the *m*, were written identically. The *zayin* and *ches* were indistinguishable. Words and whole sentences were abbreviated. The Hebrew, of course, was written without vowels, and consonants stretched frighteningly along line after line. It was, however, written for his grandchildren and I could not put it aside until I had rewritten it in my own hand and translated it into English.

I am one of Josef Neuberger's twenty grandchildren and I knew him until I was almost thirteen. We were good friends, as close as an old man and a young girl can be.

I still have a box filled with the presents he gave me, not ordinary presents, real treasures. There is a little porcelain bird, a dinner bell with a painted parrot seated on a perch, a paper weight shaped like a lion. In many folds of tissue paper lies a shell necklace, with a mother-of-pearl heart in the center, too heavy to wear. Beside the pink satin handkerchief, a souvenir from Rachel's tomb, lies the last present he gave me. It is a bottle, shaped and painted like a fish, with a cork protruding from the mouth. He gave it to me on my twelfth birthday. It was filled with wine and he cautioned me to save it for the two of us to drink on my wedding day. He found such treasures on pushcarts on Hester Street and Rivington Street, painted them, took them apart if it was possible, so that when given, they were unmistakably his.

Josef Neuberger was always spoken of as a remarkable man, not great, not brilliant, not, God forbid, successful, but nevertheless a giant among men. If I had not my own memories, I might have thought, like others who had not known him, that his family had made him larger than life: that they had

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SYLVIA ROTHCHILD's grandfather was one of the millions who left the hard life of 19th-century Europe to find a new life, by no means easy, in America. He left a moving personal record which offers some glimpses of the realities of that historic epoch, and of the pattern of Jewish personality and individuality that marked the first-generation East European pioneer here. Mrs. Rothchild here offers a translation of her grandfather's memoir together with her own preface. The most recent of the numerous short stories by Sylvia Rothchild which we have been happy to publish in our pages was "The Soldier and His Girl" (October 1952). Mrs. Rothchild is a native of Brooklyn, but now lives with her husband and two children in Sharon, Massachusetts.

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conjured up a giant out of worn old memories because they needed a strong man to lean upon. He was, actually, an impressive figure. When most grandfathers were small, bent, shriveled people, he was tall, taller than his children. He held his head high. His reddish beard was brushed and neatly parted in the center, his clothes were always clean and pressed, and his calfskin shoes gleamed. He carried an ebony walking stick which he flourished when he talked. The gilt dog's head on the top of the cane jumped like a puppet in his hand.

He came to the graduation exercises of my junior high school and my teacher was delighted with him. She shook his hand up and down while he smiled and said, *"zehr fein, zehr fein."* He couldn't speak a word of English and seemed so unconcerned about it that people usually apologized to him because they couldn't speak Yiddish.

"Now there's an aristocrat for you," I heard Miss Maguire say to another teacher. "Such distinguished bearing! You just don't see people like that nowadays." Miss Maguire put her arm around me when we said goodbye and she congratulated me on having such an elegant grandfather.

WHEN I was very young, all the Biblical heroes had my grandfather's face. When he wore a flowing white robe and jeweled skullcap on Passover, he looked to me like a smaller version of the Almighty Himself. In spite of his imposing mien, however, he rarely seemed solemn or forbidding. He rode his grandchildren up and down on his boot, and playfully pinched their bottoms. He enjoyed throwing babies in the air, while their mothers squealed with fear. He was proud of his strength and once showed us that he could lift a chair high in the air, holding only one of the legs. He told stories to anyone that would listen and after his dinner on Saturday, he sang *Z'miros* until it was time for his afternoon nap. My cousins and I fought for the privilege of brushing his beard and untying the laces of his shoes.

As I grew older, I separated my grandfather from the vision of the Almighty that I carried and gave him instead the role of the Lord's watchman. It was he who must not know of the ride taken on the Sabbath, of the forbidden food tasted, of all the numerous transgressions that tempted us on all sides. When we were uncertain of some course of action, he told us what the Lord would accept and what was repugnant to Him. With the "thou shalt not" so plainly in view, even small sins brought us more fear and discomfort than pleasure. If his children and grandchildren strayed from the path he set for them while he was there to lead them, it was not because they opposed him but because they were not strong enough to oppose the society in which they lived. Again and again, I heard my aunts and uncles say, "I try to live like Mama and Papa. I do the best I can," their voices showing plainly that they did not think they were succeeding.

My grandfather presided over the celebration of festivals and holy days like a king over his court. On Passover he conducted a Seder, and led the family in singing until the small hours of the morning. The neighbors sat in the hallway to listen until we went home. On Purim, he watched while all the grandchildren, and some of the children too, masqueraded and performed for him. He gave the Chanukah money to the children and received the first fruits of his daughters' ovens on Succoth and Shavuoth. They all came with delicacies to tempt him and watched jealously to see whose he would taste first. On the High Holy Days he wore a tall silk hat to the synagogue and sat up on the platform facing the congregation. After the services were over, my cousins and I walked home with him. We all lived in Williamsburg then and the walk was from the synagogue on South Fourth Street and Marcy Avenue to Division Street. Broadway was crowded with the traffic hurrying to the Williamsburg Bridge and there was neither a traffic light nor a policeman where Broadway and Marcy Avenue intersected. My grandfather did not stop for traffic. He held his cane high and, single file, like a family of ducks, we crossed behind him, while cars screeched to a stop all around us.

ALL of his waking hours not spent in prayer or study were passed at a crude wooden table near his bedroom window where his paints, brushes, and drawing materials lay always ready for use. My grandfather painted signs, pictures, bottles, coconuts, and trays. The signs were in Hebrew, in German, or in Gothic script. The pictures were a strange

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collection of primitive work. He had never studied art or even visited a museum. There were many peacocks, painted on black velvet, blue ones with silver-spotted tails, red with gold, some all the colors of the rainbow. There were many country scenes painted on white oilcloth in lieu of canvas. In his tenement apartment on Avenue C in lower Manhattan and again on Division Street in Brooklyn, he painted a distant world of barns, ponds, ducks, chickens, deer in the forest. He seemed more concerned with the design of the whole picture than with the problems of perspective. I remember a farmer's wife standing next to a house, her head reaching the chimney, her waist higher than the door. Ducks that waddled next to chickens were sometimes ten times their size. The water in his ponds was wet though the sun shone like a flat gold piece in the sky. In his dining room there was a large picture of the sacrifice of Isaac. A huge angel perched on a dwarf apple tree, his wings drooping to the ground. The apples were made of tinsel paper, from chocolate-covered cherries that we saved for him. He glued them on in glittering circles that shimmered in the candlelight on Friday night. Some of the pictures were flat almost like Egyptian drawings, or the illustrations in the old Passover Haggadahs; others were realistic scenes of snow heaped high in the fields, lambs in pasture, and deer with gentle eyes. There were recognizable portraits of his favorite rabbis, with the intricate detail of the beards, the fur of the *shtreimel* and the folds in the caftan caught with pen and black india ink. Every few years he found a new medium. Bottles were irresistible. Nothing that could hold wine or water escaped his brush. For a while he covered two-foot squares of oilcloth with apples, grapes, and pineapples. He framed them as pictures and then added two handles so that they could also serve as trays. When he tired of the trays he busied himself with coconuts. He painted hideous faces on the rough, edible part, cut a small circle on the top of the head, with a knob on it so that it could be lifted easily. The coconuts were natural collectors of old jewelry, hairpins, paper clips, and rubber bands. There was a Dutch shelf two feet lower than the ceiling in the dining room, where I slept, on which the coconuts stood in a row leering at me.

I spent many pleasant hours with my grandfather while he taught me to copy his ducks, his dogs, houses, and figures. While I covered the pages as he showed me to, he told stories of his childhood. I listened carefully, but I remembered only isolated incidents, never gleaning enough to reconstruct a way of life that I could visualize. My parents did not talk of their early days. It was as if they had purposely forgotten the details. I often wondered about my grandfather. What were his beginnings? What was the source of his dignity, so nicely balanced with humor and gentleness? I looked into his memoir eagerly, hoping to find the spring from which his complicated spirit flowed; the patience, the desire for beauty and perfection, the individualism and faith, all bathed in innocence that was not cloaked in foolishness.

After many months with three dictionaries at my side, this is what I found:

Josef Neuberger's Story

THE time has come to set down the story of my joys and troubles, but I sit staring out of the window, asking myself why I try to do this. I awakened from my nap only half an hour ago, and my eyes are still heavy, but not as heavy as my feet. Each day as I lift one leg and then the other to pull on my boots, I marvel at what a burden they have become. These same feet took me barefoot in the mountain snow, barefoot while I held my boots in my hands, loath to spoil them on the wet ground, and now I can scarcely lift them to tie my boots.

When I came into the kitchen to wash, Eltse was sorting *kashe*. It was in a little mound on the porcelain table and she shoveled it into a dish with her fingers, carefully pulling out the black specks. She had been ironing while I slept and the kitchen smelled of steam and starch. The two hot flatirons were still cooling on the stove.

I have spent more time looking out the window than writing. From the fifth floor, I can, thank God, see the sky as well as the rooftops. It is well worth climbing five stories for that piece of sky. It must surely seem like a prison down in the dark lower stories, especially for those who have no windows in the front. Strange that I have never become accustomed to the ugly flat rooftops.

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I see them as fresh each time as the first, fifteen years ago, when I thought that the city had been devastated by fire and that the roofs had been burnt off. I can see the people, the wagons, and the cars below, scurrying like so many insects. With the fire-escape bars between them and me, they are on exhibit, like animals in a zoo.

In our comfortable room with the mirrored oak buffet, a china closet filled with glass and silver, and a round table on thick carved legs, the words I prepare to write seem like strangers to me. I am a stranger to myself. Yet how can one help but wonder at the many lives a person can lead, so many and so different that it is a miracle that one knows who he is. That alone is reason to write, to look again at all the lives I have known, at all the roads He has spread out for me. I ask myself whether I write this for my children and in truth, I think not. What can I tell them now that I haven't told them already? What that is new can they learn now that they have little ones of their own to teach? They are in His hands now, not mine. Perhaps, however, those little ones will read this some day and learn that a life doesn't hang ripe, like a fruit waiting to be picked, but that each of them will have to make his own. Each one must plant his seed, tend it carefully as it grows and for each moment of carelessness or foolishness, pay and pay. Of course, whether things go one way or another depends upon one's *mazel.* Should they ever wonder what I mean by mazel, let me explain that to be *mazeldik,* that is, to have mazel, supposes three things: first, that all the doors one comes to should be found open and welcoming; second, that whatever work a person finds to do should appear easy for him; and third, that he and his work should find favor in the eyes of all who behold them. Every man, naturally, has such mazel as He has ordained, sometimes good and sometimes bad, however it pleases Him. And I? Some doors have shut angrily in my face, many things that I have tried to take in my hands to do have fallen apart before I could even begin, but for reasons I cannot know I have still found favor in the eyes of those around me. The pleasure I have found among family and friends has made it impossible for me to argue with the Lord of the world, strange as His ways can be.

Now I will begin the story of my youth and my early life with my family. It is a tale of wandering from village to village, from city to city, a search for a simple livelihood that did not end until a brief while ago, a search that used up the strength of a family as the years ran by.

I was fifteen years old when my father chose a bride for me. We went to see her during the week of Passover. It took us three hours on horseback to travel from Ferescul to Gebirge, where she lived with her father and her grandmother. Her mother had died when she was very little and her father had an inn very much like our own. Eltse was small and so shy that she didn't say a single word to me all the time I was there. But she was very pleasant to look at, with a wealth of brown hair on her head and skin the color of cream. She moved very quickly, but her face was serene and her voice soft, not shrill like some women's. I remember my pleasure at her tiny ankles. The women in my family had ankles like tree stumps. Her father gave me a beautiful silver watch worth ten *gilden,* the finest present I had ever received. My father, may he rest in peace, left the bride forty gilden. We stayed with them from Friday until Sunday morning and then went home, not to return or write to each other for four years.

At home there was no talk of a livelihood for me. It was understood that when the time came I would find some small business that would earn us our bread. I spent the four years studying at the synagogue, occasionally helping my father in the inn or my uncle in the forest, where he employed many men to fell the trees.

Even when it was time for the wedding and my new clothes were prepared, when the pantry was filling with the baked goods and meats that we would take to the wedding, I had no idea of how I would support my bride. Our family traveled to the wedding together with a wagon of *strudel, lekach,* and *fluden,* with herring, wine, and brandy besides. There was my trunk of new clothes, with new boots half a yard tall, and a new fox-lined coat that was my great joy.

It was May, and the wedding was outdoors. The trees were covered with blossoms and it seemed that only good things were pos-

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sible. There was dancing and feasting for a week and then the guests went home and my little wife went back to her tasks and I looked for things to do, during the three months *kest*. There was nothing in her village to keep us there when the three months were over and we decided to return to Feresçul, where my parents lived. I had heard that there was a mill there for sale and we prepared to buy it. We packed our clothes, the pots, pans, and linens that were part of the dowry, and arranged to travel on a *splaf*, a flat raft made of thirty or forty logs tied together. The splaf traveled on the man-made waterway between Kanyateh and Vishnitz. We were traveling only five of the ten miles. The splaf was used in warm weather, when the water tumbled noisily over the dam, carrying with it whatever came in its way. The water was full of large stones, roots, and branches and it took a strong and skillful man to manage a splaf safely. In the winter-time, the water was a thin sheet of ice and horses with cleats on their shoes pulled sleds along the frozen way.

The morning of our departure, the grandmother decided that she would come along and visit my parents for a few days. We were all busy packing and finally I loaded our possessions on the splaf, the trunk of clothes, the bedding, and household goods. I wrapped rags around the trunk and tied the smaller packages to the logs so that I need not worry that they would fall into the water. When I was ready, I helped Eltse on and sat her on top of the trunk and then went back for the grandmother. "Is it safe?" she asked me, pointing to a deep crack between two of the logs. She was really frightened and clung to the railing of the dock until some of the other passengers mocked her. "The crack was there when you were young and beautiful, old one," someone said. I pulled her away from the rail and put her on top of the trunk, next to my wife. Eltse comforted her and gossiped with her to distract her from her fear and I watched the driver, marveling how he maneuvered the splaf through the boulders and stumps in the water. The sun was warm and the water sparkling. There were willows along both banks bent into the water like girls washing their hair. We passed some wild ducks, some fisherman on the shore. People waved to us, little children hooted, and we heard halloos from the wagons that passed on the road along the water's edge. Then with no warning, without a chance to catch a breath, the peace and quiet was broken by a tearing sound and my feet parted of themselves beneath me as the splaf began to break in two. By the time I regained my footing and turned to my dear one, the logs had broken apart, pouring the people and trunks into the water. I hurried to my wife, who was struggling to keep the old lady afloat. The water reached to their necks, but the current was strong and they were so frightened that their fear alone could have drowned them. I held on to the two of them and together we made our way to the shore, our clothes heavy weights about our legs, our shoes deep in the mud that tried to suck us into the earth. When I saw my charges safe on the ground, I returned into the water to see what I could find of our possessions. Those that were tied to the logs had already gone downstream. The heavy trunk was deep in the mud, entangled in branches, sopping with water. I reached down again and again. It was impossible to lift it. Finally I opened it. The water had already seeped into it anyway and everything was ruined. I came back to shore with a small handful of wet clothes and linens, all I could carry, and we sat together on the shore as dumb and bewildered as the other survivors. Next to us lay the bodies of two who had lost more than their possessions. The driver was one of them. We all looked out on the water on which there was no vestige of the accident. The sun still shone brightly and the leaves shimmered on the trees. It was hard to thank Him for our lives, sitting there wet with all our possessions in the mud. My dear one sat biting her lips, silently, not crying for all of the years of work that she had lost, though when I thought of my new fox-lined coat that I had never worn and would never even see, my lips trembled. The old one wailed and sobbed and we could say nothing to comfort her because she said again and again, "I knew and I knew and no one listened to me."

We went in a wagon the rest of the journey and came home to my father's house empty-handed. But we bought the mill anyway. My uncle lent me the money and we had nothing else we could do. Did I say we bought the mill? It was the mill with the

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two stones and the hard dirt floor that bought us. Not only did it buy us but it was ready to devour us alive. It was a silent mill, with few customers bringing grain to grind. It earned us the water for our kashe, but the kashe we had to earn for ourselves. After a few hungry months, when we had imposed too long upon my father, who had other children to provide for, I left my wife at the mill and went to work in the forest for my uncle. His land was a day's journey away. My job was to supervise the thirty young men who cut the trees, to keep them at their work, to stop their fighting, to make sure they made a full profit for Uncle David. The forest, however, is a proper place for animals and when human beings go into it to live it treats them just as it treats the bears and the wolves. We slept on the hard, bare ground, winter and summer. We ate *mamelige* and *brinze* for breakfast, dinner, and supper. On the Sabbath, for a change I ate the mamelige cold instead of warm. Meanwhile my wife struggled with the mill alone.

WHEN I finally came home after three months, I came with a cow that I had bought with eighty precious gilden. The cow was as big as a deer, but the milk poured out of her just as well as out of a cow for a hundred gilden. This visit, however, was so unsuccessful, that to this day the month in which it occurred gives me a feeling of anxiety. The second day that I was home I had a visitor, an envoy from no one less than His Majesty Franz Joseph himself. He knocked loudly on the door and walked in. His clothes were as bright as a bird's, but his expression as dark as the blackest year. He came to remind me that I was twenty years old and that I had not served in the army, I, without whom they could hardly get along.

I did not sleep that night. Here we were in debt, with a mill that we could not keep, and though it could not keep us either, we could not part with it because no one else wanted it. Our first child was stirring in his mother and the prospect of four years in His Majesty's service seemed too much to bear. One could always buy one's freedom, but what would I use for money? Early in the morning, before the birds were up, I went out on the doorstep, rolled a cigarette, lit it as if I were going to enjoy a smoke, and then after taking a few puffs, I pressed it against the sole of my bare right foot. First one burnt hole and then another. The sweat poured down the sides of my face, mixed with tears. Then I rubbed some dirt into the sores and waited for them to fester. The next day I made a crutch so that I could walk and when the officer came again I told him that I had tried to extinguish a fire by stamping on it and had burnt my feet.

He trusted me just as I trusted him. When I told him jokingly that it was better to lose a bargain with a clever man than win with a fool, he did not laugh. "You'll serve," he said angrily. "You can pay the hospital bill for the cure and then you'll come and serve."

Well, I did not serve. I paid the hospital for its services and myself for the pain, but I kept irritating the wound with all kinds of caustic substances, and it did not heal. Four times they called me and each time I still limped. The swelling that went down on Monday came up on Thursday until they grew tired of looking at me, almost as tired as I was of them. Meanwhile, my wife, though happy to have me at home, worried about the outcome of the foolishness. She enjoyed the cow and we both reveled in the butter and the cheese that filled our empty larder. In my absence she had been baking rolls and cakes that she sold to the inns and wealthy homes, and the broken ones, the misshapen ones that she could not sell, gave us a feast every day now that we had a glass of buttermilk and a piece of cheese in addition.

Just as we began to take our little cow for granted and to love her as a useful member of the family, she was taken away from us. How? How can a cow be taken away? Not stolen, not shot by a hunter accidentally, not suddenly afflicted with a sickness. She stood blithely in the meadow, this cow of ours, in my Cousin Samson Meyer's meadow, that is. We didn't have a place to pasture her. A summer shower, out of the ordinary in October, began to fall out of the sky. A small clap of thunder, a larger clap, a streak of lightning cracked the heavens in two and the rain poured not only down, but sidewards also and even leaped up from the ground as if to go back into the sky again. And a bolt of lightning, with the whole earth beneath it, with forests and fields, with empty roads and rivers, chose my little cow for its target

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and killed her instantly. That night I sold the meat to a Gentile for five gilden. Should he ever remember to pay me, I will gladly take out my little book and inscribe the date.

I was tired, tired of calamity, tired of threats about the army, tired of the forest and the mamelige and brinze and even more than weary of the useless mill. Without telling my wife what I proposed to do, I traveled to Vishnitz, to learn a trade. I put my pride aside and apprenticed myself to a painter for fifty *greitzer* a day. After three months, I received a pleading letter from my wife, who had heard that instead of hunting for a business I was wielding a brush and staining my beard with paint. She begged me not to shame her by turning to a laborer's work, only to come home and together we would find a way to keep from starving. Not too sadly, I parted from my painter boss. Just as I was leaving Vishnitz, however, I met an uncle of mine, David Sherf. I told him, when he asked how it was with me, that I was without a livelihood, my wife with child and a mill I could only sell to an enemy my only business. He seemed really sorry for me.

He had with him two horses and a wagon that he was taking to market. He expected to get as much as a hundred gilden for them, but listening to my story, he recalled that with two horses and a wagon one could earn ten gilden a day easily, without lifting a hand, by buying salt in the mines in Kose and carrying them to Yablentz. That was all there was to it, he said. I would get it on the wagon in Kose, take if off at Yablentz, and bring home ten gilden a day. Since I had not seen ten gilden in a week since my marriage, except of course in the forest, it seemed an irresistible proposition. But where could I get two horses, I who a short while ago had lost a cow? But everything was easy for my uncle. He offered me the two horses for only eighty gilden and said that I could pay him at my convenience. For the moment it seemed that all my problems were solved. He gave me the horses there in the market place and I went directly to Kose for the salt. The air was cold and biting; the blades on the wagon-sled slid quickly over the ice and made the journey easily while I counted how many weeks it would take to pay for the horses, how much money I could save by Pesach, what a wonderful *bris* we could have on sixty gilden a week. Finally I put the load of salt on the wagon, paid for it and turned around to Yablentz and home. I turned, but the horses stood where they were. What was the matter? Nothing was the matter. These horses just did not like to pull a load. They took two steps and sat down for a while as stubborn as donkeys. It seemed that I pulled the horses and the wagon together. The journey home, which was to take me two days, took me and my fine horses five days. When we came to Stebnitz at the foot of the hill, they stopped completely. They wouldn't move an inch. They stood waiting for me to pull the wagon. I pleaded with them, they didn't move. I beat them, they didn't stir. It was twilight and I thought surely that I would remain there and freeze to death with my masters. Finally I sat down and wept and begged, "Dear God in heaven, help me for my wife and child's sake if not my own. What have I done to deserve such a thing? Why should a man have to die of cold and hunger because two horses are lazy?" Nothing stirred on the snow. I saw not a soul, just sky, water, and a mountain, and me in the middle. Then as I sat despairing, I heard a shout from the other side of the water. "Halloo!" someone called. "Take you over the hill for twenty greitzer." "Yah!" I called back. "Come and I'll pay you." Twenty greitzer, if he had asked fifty, could I stay there all night? He came from across the water with two half-dead horses. He tied them before my own, called out, "*Veyoh!*" and in no time we were at the top of the hill. When I stopped at the inn on the other side I was like one rescued from the grave. But I was not to be much more comfortable than before. Cold, hungry, frozen as I was, I did not dare sleep in a warm bed. If I slept, what would become of the salt that had already cost me so dearly. It was so cold that birds fell dead and frozen with the snow, but I slept in the barn, at the foot of the wagon.

I brought the salt to Yablentz Friday before sundown, only a small vestige of the load I had bought, and then I had to unload the frozen pieces, without losing even more. But what is the use of telling anything further? Any of the young Gentiles who carried salt from Kose to Yablentz earned if not

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ten then surely five or six gilden a day, and I the great businessman who deals in horses could scarcely eke out three gilden. Why? Because my aristocratic horses did not like to work for a living. I should have sent them to the Yeshiva and let them spend their days in study. In study and eating, for they ate up whatever little they earned. Finally, only a few days before my son was born I was so steeped in hatred for them, for all the misfortune they had brought me, that half in earnest, half in jest, I said, "A little miracle, dear God, put an end to these horses before they make an end of me." And He heard me so quickly that I could scarcely stand the shock. I came into the stall the next morning to feed the noble beasts and one of them was lying with his legs in the air. It appeared that he had fallen and his good companion had trod on him. The standing horse looked at him without regret, as though he had accomplished something out of the ordinary, a helper to the Lord of the Universe, an executor of miracles.

WHERE was I now? In search of a livelihood for a change. Mine had blown away as the summer blows away, leaving the whole world naked and bare. My son was born, and we made merry at the bris and the *pidyon ha-ben* but we sang more than we ate. My wife could make a fine repast out of a handful of sawdust, but she was not well and who else could make something out of the air. Many times we would find on Fridays and holidays that a basket of food had been left at our door. We never knew where they came from until my Aunt Miriam died and the baskets came no longer. She was a rare woman indeed, almost too good for this world. I am sorry that my children could not know her.

My uncle came running to see me when he heard about the horse. He had almost despaired of ever getting his eighty gilden. He took the good horse, so good it should have been drowned before it was born, and left me the other, which was almost, but not quite dead. In fact there was still a large spark of life in him. A peasant offered me thirty gilden for the horse, he was sure that he could cure him. But Samson Meyer, my cousin, who heard him make his offer, said, "Don't be a fool. If he can cure it, so can I." Then you can get fifty gilden for him in the spring. He was so sure and so insistent. He even offered to take the horse back with him and feed him. "Whatever my cow leaves, he can have," he promised. Finally I let him persuade me. He persuaded me, but He was persuaded otherwise. On the way to Samson's house the horse laid himself down on the ground and died and took with him to the other world my thirty gilden. My cousin tried to comfort me, "I'll make it up to you. It's my fault. I'll pay you thirty gilden for my mistake." But he didn't say when and I never found out.

Twenty years later, when my wife and children were ready to leave for America, my uncle collected the payment for his horse. When he came to bid them goodbye he took back with him a bundle of pillows that they had wrapped to take to the boat with them. The debt was finally paid and my aunt could add to the collection of pillows and blankets heaped in the middle of each bed which already reached halfway to the ceiling.

The next dream? Everyone said, "Josef, you need an inn, not horses. A man who can talk to people, who has some learning behind him, and many friends as you do, has no right to confine himself to dumb animals. With your reputation for good fellowship, with your family and friends alone, your fortune will be made." I told myself that if three men look at you and say that you're drunk, it is surely time to lie down and go to sleep. Now how many had told me about an inn? Enough to convince me. On the road between Kose and Yablentz, not far from the hill, I built a house with my own two hands. And with God's help I finished it and opened it for business. We served meals and drinks and provided a few beds for overnight guests. All kinds of people stopped with us. The family, however, did not always understand that they were to pay for our services, and other guests did not come often enough. I remember well the night our second son was born. There was a storm outside that drenched the whole world and shook the houses and trees as if they were made of paper. We had four guests that night. The inn, however, was only one large room and my wife needed it for herself that night. I apologized to the guests and begged them to find another place to sleep. I can still see them going

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out into the rain, grumbling, angry at the child that wanted to come into the world. The son was born, a beautiful boy, and some of our lodgers remained long enough to come to the *bris*.

The inn brought us no prosperity. It was not as bad as the mill, but still not enough to keep us fed. The only other thing I could do was go back into the woods for my uncle, mamelige and brinze, and an animal's life. Reluctant as I was, I went. It was not easy to leave a woman alone at an inn with little ones of her own to care for. The peasants who came to drink would never leave until they were drunk. Once drunk, they would try their best to kill each other. Once one took another's eye out with his gun. They would tell my wife, while they still could talk, "If we fight don't be frightened, we won't hurt you. Take your children and hide yourselves on the stove until we are finished." They never did touch her or harm her, but the fear and the worry were harm enough. I would lie night after night on the hard ground and think of how she fared there alone. Once I came home unexpectedly, to find I could not leave her there alone any longer. Eight young hooligans spent the afternoon at the house. They departed so full of drink that they could hardly stand, but when they came out of the house, they thought of a lively thing to do. They picked up handfuls of rocks and threw them at the house. Eltse and the children were on top of the stove, feeling the house shake all around them, fearful for their lives. I heard the commotion long before I reached the house. When I came in sight of the devils I was so angry that I could have killed them. One at a time, I picked them up, beat them, and threw them down on the road. Those beatings earned me the title of "*hazak*" an honor not often given to a Jew. But it was safer with the peasants to be feared than loved. This, however, was the end. I knew I could no longer leave my family alone. I wrote my uncle, thanked him for treating me so well and helping make my life so easy and pleasant. I told him that it was time that I brought my family to a city, or my children would only know of the brawling life in a tavern and never be able to talk to people. I decided to sell the inn and finally found a buyer who paid me five hundred gilden for it. Then we set out for Lenkovitz, near Zernovitz. Lenkovitz was not really a large city, but after living in the woods so long it seemed like a metropolis to us.

I BOUGHT a lumber yard in Lenkovitz. It seemed like a good business. It had earned its owners kashe and wheat, fish on Friday, and meat for the Sabbath. Like the others before me, I went to Yablentz to buy wood. My uncle was pleased to hear that I too was dealing in wood, and he even gave me a present of some lumber, almost enough to build a house for ourselves. I took that as a hopeful sign, never before had my uncle given me anything for a present. I brought the wood back to Lenkovitz, an investment of two hundred gilden, ready to open my business and build a house for us to live in. Temporarily, I had set up a rough shack, no larger than a *succah*, with a good brick oven for cooking. We planned to live there until I could obtain a permit to put up our house.

What does the Almighty do? He brings a flood to Lenkovitz that floats the whole town away. Our little shack was high up on a hill and from our window we could see the water rising and rising, houses swimming on the water, people in boats where forests and fields once were. The lumber yard was at the bottom of the hill and we saw that swim away as if we had not paid for it. The water came up to our doorstep and began to recede. My lumber yard was left unrecognizable and not until six weeks later did the water recede sufficiently so that I could see if I could find anything of my investment of two hundred gilden. I found very little, salvaging only enough to build a house, with little to sell, though there would have been plenty of customers had I had some lumber to sell.

It was necessary to have a building permit in order to build a house in Lenkovitz. Jews did not get permits without great sums of money. I, of course, had no money. The peasants in the neighborhood came to see me as soon as I had bought the land and told me quite plainly that if I should try to put up a house without a permit, they would promptly burn it down. They said, however, that with a permit I could do as I pleased.

I thought about the matter for a while and then went to the mayor of the town, and brought along a present for him, a bottle of

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very fine schnapps. "What do you want?" he asked me. "Nothing," I said. "Only that you taste what I brought you." He did me a great favor and tasted a little. I let the taste speak for me. After all, how can one know a stranger? One who bears goods gifts must surely be good himself. Meanwhile he took one taste and another and called to the kitchen that potatoes should be put on to bake. It didn't take long before he became quite gay and exchanged all manner of familiarities with me, jokes about the town, about the flood, about women and such things. Then cautiously, but firmly, I told him that I had a small request to make, one that he must not refuse. He leaned back in his chair and said that for his part all things were possible. I told him then that I wanted to build a small house but was afraid that my neighbors would not let me if I did not have a permit. I showed him my receipt for payment for the land and then took out the paper requesting a permit, already filled in, and gave it to him to sign. He called his wife and asked for the seal. She moistened it carefully and pasted it on the paper. "Here you are," he said. I left the schnapps and hurried home. I immediately began to build. The next morning a crowd of people came to inquire about my permit. There was no friendship in their faces, but when I showed them the seal they turned themselves toward town to see the mayor. The mayor had slept well, and when he awoke he had forgotten about me, about the seal, and my house. When the villagers were done with him, they gave him reason to forget the taste of the schnapps too. But I built my house with neither the approval nor the friendship of my neighbors. We lived in Lenkovitz for eight years, never earning a proper living. I decided again to sell my house and my business and go to a large city either to work or find a business. We came then to Lemberg [or Luov].

LEMBERG was a large city with much business, much work, and many, many poor people. Here, I said, if I am miserable I will be no worse than the others. I sold the house in Lenkovitz and took my children, who by this time numbered seven, and traveled to Lemberg.

We searched until we found a place to live. The only thing we could pay for was a tailor's shop. It was one large room. The tailor worked there all day with his assistant and we had the room all night. The rent was six gilden a month, a terrible price for so little. But my wife, my children, and I, and two boarders, besides, lived there for several years. My children were able to find work in the city, though I walked the streets from early morning till late at night, and found nothing to employ me. Once in a while I found something for a few days but the wages were no more than seven gilden a week. Still, if it had lasted a week I would have felt myself lucky. If it weren't for the children's earnings we could have starved. Itzik, my eldest son, earned eight gilden a week, of which he gave me five. Chantze earned sixty cents, Brantze two gilden, and Rachel fifty cents. The others earned nothing.

We lived on old bread and herring, and it was a sad Sabbath that did not find even that on the table. I remember such a Sabbath, when I wanted to borrow a gilden. I came to a man who could lend one, offering my *tallis* as collateral. But the value of *talleisim* was small in Lemberg and I had to return home for my coat. I borrowed the gilden and we had more than enough to eat.

When the children grew older and earned more we took other rooms, and paid as much as twelve gilden a month. But in all the time in Lemberg we always lived from hand to mouth and there were many times when the hand went to the mouth empty. One evening the children came home from work and found nothing to eat for supper. I asked them to pretend that it was Yom Kippur, to go to bed without complaining, and in the morning there would surely be something for them. But God brought the morning and forgot the breakfast. Again I promised them, go to work, when you come home there will surely be something for you.

Such days and nights were not infrequent in Lemberg. Our dear God gave us the strength and patience to bear it. Not only to bear it, but not to bow our heads before it. Of all of us, my good wife was the strongest. At a time when we went hungry every other day she found a wallet with a hundred gilden that the landlady had lost. A hundred gilden was a fortune for us, but she returned it. I don't know what I or my children would have done. But in returning

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it she made me richer than by keeping it. For the moment, it seemed that we could afford to return it. Each day I ask for her only strength and health, that she may yet be happy with the children for whom she suffered and struggled so much. Many times, during the lean years, I thought that our children were fortunate indeed that their own mother, and not a strange woman, had borne them.

The time came when we could not bear the bleak future of Lemberg any longer. My parents had married off their youngest child and gone to Palestine to die. My older sons were soon to be threatened with service in the army. The hope of the world was in America and we, who had nothing to leave behind, were ready to go. I went first with my two eldest children, and as soon as we had saved enough for passage for the others my wife came with them.

Earning a living in America was a different problem. Here there was no shame, except for a lazy man. One put oneself in harness and worked. It was not possible to grow rich, but I was no longer concerned with riches. It was more important that we were in no danger any longer of being hungry or homeless. My sons and I were all painters. We painted tenements and stores, synagogues, covered with murals, wedding halls, and endless apartments. I thanked Him every day for the chance to work.

The work, the hard work, is done now. My sons and daughters look out for me. Our needs are not great. I have no complaints against the Lord of the Universe. I wish for my children and my children's children an easier life than my own, but when they reach my years may they not be less satisfied than I. Let them remember too that more important than an easy life is the strength to withstand whatever life He gives.

Postscript

THERE it ended. I was thirteen years old when he died. I remember watching in awe while all the adults I knew, and many I had never seen before, crowded his house, the hallways, and the street outside. Many wept loudly and wrung their hands. I had loved him, but I couldn't cry, though my knees were weak and the ground shifted beneath my feet. It was much later that I knew that they wept not only for him, they wept because fathers die; they wept for innocence and certainty; for an old order that was dying, that they could not keep and could not bear to throw away. Surely some wept because the Lord's watchman was gone and they were not sure that they could commune with Him alone.

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CEDARS OF LEBANON

POEMS OF THE FESTIVALS

Translations of Piyyutim

THEODOR H. GASTER

YOM KIPPUR is more than a Day of Atonement on which individuals purge their sins by the threefold process of introspection, confession, and regeneration. It is also a day on which the collective House of Israel annually bleaches out "the world's slow stain," restoring itself once more to that state of holiness and dedication necessary for the fulfillment of its mission as the witness of God among men.

In the traditional idiom of Jewish thought, this process of purgation is expressed primarily in terms of human supplication on the one side and divine forgiveness on the other. At the same time, however, a deeper note is also sounded. Israel and God are bound to each other by an everlasting covenant and, under that covenant, if Israel has the obligation of holiness, God has reciprocally that of mercy. The Blessing of God can therefore be compelled by righteousness as well as entreated by prayer; and one purpose of Yom Kippur is so to compel it.

Nor is it only the righteousness of the living generation that may be enlisted to this end; the merit of Israel's ancestors—from the Biblical patriarchs downward—have, so to speak, accumulated a substantial credit with God upon which it is possible and permissible for their descendants to draw. Even so, however, says an insight born of experience, a true balance is never struck, and in actual fact the clemency of God always exceeds the virtue of men.

It is this sense of urgent entreaty blended, even at the risk of paradox, with a calmer foregone assurance, that informs the *piyyutim*, or liturgical poems, that are interspersed in the traditional Yom Kippur services.

THE following specimens are selected from both the Ashkenazic (German-Polish) and the Sephardic (Spanish and Portuguese) rituals. Moreover, for good measure, the selection is concluded with a poem for the Rejoicing in the Law (*Simhath Torah*), the celebration with which the autumnal cycle of festivals comes to an end.

The translations are taken—like those presented last month—from the writer's work, *Festivals of the Jewish Year*, which will be published by William Sloane Associates in November, and which includes many further renderings of *piyyutim* covering the entire range of the liturgy.—THEODOR H. GASTER.

AND ALL AVOW

(Ha-ohez be-yad middath mishpat)

From the Additional Service (Musaph), Ashkenazic rite.

ALL justice holds He in His open hands,
And all avow that constant He remains.
Beyond all veils He sees, and understands;
And all avow: He probes the heart and reins.

Clamorous Death through Him gives up its prize;
And all avow: no savior is as He.
Dwellers on earth are judg'd before His eyes;
And all avow: His word is equity.

Erstwhile "I AM that which I AM," He said;
And all avow: He was, is, and will be;
For in that Name His glory shines outspread;
And all avow that nonpareil is He.

God thinks on them who think on Him alway;
And all avow: He keeps His promise true.
He portions life unto the living; they

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Avow that *He* doth live the ages through.

In His wide covert good and bad find room;
And all avow: His good on all is thrust.
Knitting our substance in the very womb,
He knows—as all avow—we are but dust.

Long is His arm and doth all things embrace;
And all avow: by Him all deeds are done.
'Mid darkness dwells He, in His secret place;
And all avow: He one is and alone.

No king there is but He doth him install;
And all avow: He is the world's great King;
Omnipotent, His rule is over all;
Yet all avow: from Him doth mercy spring.

Patient, He from the froward turns His gaze;
And all avow: He pardons and He spares.
Remote on high, He guards His servants' ways;
And all avow: He answers whisper'd prayers.

Sinners ne'er beat upon a closèd door;
And all avow: nor is His hand clos'd tight.
The wicked seeks He out, says: Sin no more;
And all avow: in justice is His might.

Umbrage with Him comes slow, compassion fast;
And all avow: He is not soon enrag'd;
Vengeance and Wrath by Mercy are outpass'd;
And all avow: He swiftly is assuag'd.

Young and old by Him are levelèd,
And great and small are equal in His sight;
One net of judgment over all is spread;
And all avow that He doth judge aright.

Zealous is He for blamelessness, and they
That blameless are do reap His rich reward;
And all with one consent avow and say:
Blameless in all He doeth is the LORD.

—*attributed to* JOHANAN HA-KOHEN, (9TH CENT.)

THE HIGH PRIEST

(Mar'eh kohen)

Chanted, in the Ashkenazic rite, after the description of the Temple service ('Abodah). Based on Ecclesiasticus, chapter 50.

THERE shone a splendor on the high priest's face,
When safe he came forth from the holy place,

Like as the spangled curtain of the sky;
Like as the sparks that from the angels fly;

Like as the azure skeins we wear so proud;*
Like as the rainbow poised within the cloud;

Like as the sheen which our first parents wore
In Eden's garden in the days of yore;

Like as a rose within a garden bed;
Like as a crown upon a kingly head;

Like as the radiance in a bridegroom's eye;
Like snow-white robes in all their purity;

Like courtiers stol'd for audience with their kings;
Like as the daystar when the morning springs.

*I.e. on the praying shawl; compare Numbers 15:37.

THE CLOSING OF THE GATE

(El nora 'alîlah)

Chanted, in the Sephardic rite, as a prelude to the Concluding Service (Neîlah).

GOD of all that wondrous is,
God of deeds tremendous,
Now, when heaven's gates are closing,
Thy forgiveness send us.

Few we be, yet in Thy favor
All our hopes reposing,
Tearful eyes we turn to Thee,
When the gates are closing.

Lord, we pour our souls to Thee;
Rend the sins that rend us;
Now, when heaven's gates are closing,
Thy forgiveness send us.

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Save us, Lord, from scourge and sorrow,
Mercy interposing;
Seal us in the Book of Life,
When the gates are closing.

Show us pity, bring to end
All our foes horrendous;
Now, when heaven's gates are closing,
Let Thy grace defend us.

Grant us for our fathers' sake
Blessing and reposing;
Lord, renew the days of old,
When the gates are closing.

Homeward unto Zion, Lord,
Bring Thy flock, and tend us;
Now, when heaven's gates are closing,
Let Thy grace defend us.

Through the stillness of the twilight
Sound the angels' horn,
And Elijah cry through darkness,
Heralding the morn.

—Moses ibn Ezra (1070-1138)

THE MUSIC OF THE SPHERES

(Eshnabê shehakim)

From the Morning Service of the Rejoicing in the Law (Simhath Torah), Ashkenazic rite. The hymn introduces the recital of the Trisagion in the repetition of the Standing Prayer.

Through the heavenly casements
A gentle music rings;
Through the clear and cloudless sky
Sounds a low, soft melody
And all the welkin sings:

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.

The rainbow in the firmament
Is shot with colors three,*
And in those threefold tints and flames
The glory of the Lord proclaims,
A threefold litany:

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.

Enoch, who from mortal flesh
Was turn'd by God to flame,†
Sits like a teacher in the height,
Imparting to the Sons of Light
The song which they declaim:

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.

The while the Angel of the Law
Takes in his hand the fire,
And, as he wreathes a crown with it,
To crown the words of Holy Writ,‡
Sings with the heavenly choir:

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.

And he who is the Prince of Storms,
Whose winds do rage and roar,
Repeats in every thunder-crash,
Re-tells in every lightning flash,
The threefold message o'er:

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.

All the great lights of heaven,
Bear and Orion bright,
Proclaim the constancy of Him
Whose light ne'er darkens nor grows dim
Nor ever fades from sight:

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.

The curtain-folds of heaven
Are hung with tinkling bells;
When they by morning winds are stirred,
A music of the spheres is heard,
As each one rings and tells:

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.

—Amittai ben Shephatiah, (10th cent.)

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*The basic colors of the rainbow are three: red, blue, and yellow.

†It was a common medieval belief that Enoch, the patriarch who "walked with God, and was not, for God took him" (Gen. 5:24), was turned into the fiery angel Metatron.

‡Rabbinic fantasy asserted that the Law was originally written by God "in black flame upon white flame," and that every letter of it was surmounted by a fiery crown.

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ON THE HORIZON

SHOLOM ALEICHEM: JEWISHNESS IS JEWS

The Unregenerate Tribe

NORMAN PODHORETZ

SHOLOM ALEICHEM'S *The Adventures of Mottel the Cantor's Son* is the comic Odyssey of a Jewish family traveling from Kassrilovka to New York in the early years of the 20th century. It is not, I believe, considered one of Sholom Aleichem's major works; but if it doesn't rank with the Tevyeh stories, Sholom Aleichem's characteristic genius is still there. The book, made up of a series of humorous incidents all narrated by the youngest member of the family, the rascally child Mottel, is divided roughly into three parts: life in Kassrilovka; the adventures of the immigrants in various European cities; and, finally, an unfinished section describing their first months in New York.

The American sketches were written immediately before Sholom Aleichem's death in New York in 1916, and they are certainly inferior to the marvellous chapters on Kassrilovka begun nine years earlier. The humor of the last section is a little too cosy; for once the exuberance seems a bit forced. Despite this, *Mottel* remains a great work of comic literature, and Mrs. Kahana's fine translation ought to dispel any lingering doubts about whether Sholom Aleichem is "universal" enough to carry over into English. We can see now that there is nothing parochial about his humor, and his sense of life, though peculiarly Jewish in some respects, is not the less intelligible on that account.

SHOLOM Aleichem lived through the breakup of the Yiddish-speaking world. As a result of persecution from without—especially the May Laws of 1881—as well as the pressure of criticism from within, the walls of the ghetto had begun to crack. There were mass emigrations to America, and amorphous Zionist sentiment was collecting into a powerful political movement. Life in the ghetto or the Pale of Settlement had been hard, but it was also secure, clannish, and changeless. If such a life has no other advantage, it at least permits its creatures a clear knowledge of who and what they are. But with the disintegration of this dirty though cosy world, doubts and confusions about their own identity spread among the Jews at large. And the

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LAST month NORMAN PODHORETZ discussed in our pages ("Literature and the 'Spiritual Crisis'") the current tendency to regard religion and literature as comrades-in-arms in a common struggle against that "loss of values" which seems to so many people to lie at the root of all our troubles. Here Mr. Podhoretz takes a look at the work of a writer who not only would have found such discussions entertaining—he found everything entertaining—but might have failed entirely to understand them: Sholom Aleichem wrote for an audience in the full tide of its "loss of values," but so intimate was his relation to the audience that he succeeded in creating great literature out of just those elements which our present-day criers of literary doom have decided make literature impossible. Maybe, Mr. Podhoretz implies, the "lesson" of Sholom Aleichem is that Jewishness inheres simply in the Jews, and not in any ideology or doctrine that seeks to "explain" or "define" them. Mr. Podhoretz is a young American writer now working for his doctorate at Cambridge University. *The Adventures of Mottel the Cantor's Son,* which Mr. Podhoretz discusses here, was published recently by Henry Schuman in a translation by Tamara Kahana (342 pp. $4.00).

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fact that there had been dozens of attempts during the 19th century to re-define the content of Jewishness by Zionists, Hebraists, emancipationists, assimilationists, and a host of others, did not simplify matters for the *shtetl* innocents going abroad for the first time.

The various schools of thought on what constituted "Jewishness" disagreed in many details, but they were unanimous on one point—that a real Jewish identity could be maintained outside the ghetto, that, in fact, the Jewishness of the ghetto was not actually Jewishness at all, but a withered, stunted version of it. The ghetto had perverted the true spirit and character of Judaism, and thus had produced a degenerate breed of Jews with nothing of the dignity and bearing of men whose cultural heritage entitled them to walk upright among their fellows. Consequently, all the movements for their rehabilitation invariably began with attacks on the *manners* of the "ghetto Jew": the clothes he wore, the beard he grew, the food he ate, even the language he spoke—all were stigmatized, sometimes naively, as the cause of anti-Semitic outbreaks, more often as barriers to the building of a new and better world. The bitterness and hatred of Mendele's satire, for example—the only Yiddish fiction other than Sholom Aleichem's with a claim to greatness—were provoked by a conviction that the manners of East European Jews rendered them incapable of pulling themselves out of the mire. Mendele saw them as degraded by centuries of misery and poverty, ignorant of everything but the "useless" scholasticism of Rabbinic studies, boorish, dirty, and vile, so complacent that they were unwilling even to dream of better worlds.

But if Mendele was the prophet of wrath, coming, like the first Isaiah, before the destruction, Sholom Aleichem was chosen, like the second Isaiah, to bring consolation in the dark days and in the years of exile and doubt. What were the Jews—a civilization, a religion, a political entity? What was their proper language—Yiddish, Hebrew, English? How were they supposed to behave and dress? Sholom Aleichem answered these questions by refusing to believe in their validity; it is one aspect of his greatness. To him, Jewishness was not a matter of "values" or "essential characteristics" of race or nationality or both; it was nothing abstract, neither a civilization nor yet a peculiar kind of religion. Jewishness was simply the way Jews behaved; it was, in short, the very manners and habits despised by the *avant-garde*, and it was the rich diversity of attitudes implied by the things they did and the way they did them.

And what a marvellous conception of their own threatened identity he conveyed to a people deserted by external reality and harassed by the suspicion that perhaps they didn't really exist at all. He portrayed them not as they were told they ought to be, or as they might turn out to be, but truly as they were. Jewishness was sister-in-law Brocha with the big feet, father-in-law Jonah the biscuit-man, Pinney with the nose, Eli with the temper, Fat Pessie the neighbor, and the eternally weeping Mama. They are types still to be met in any Jewish neighborhood in New York or London or Paris; so right was Sholom Aleichem about the weird persistence of manners. Money, status, possessions were all at the mercy of circumstance, but the people could be relied upon to maintain their identity, at least for a little while, in spite of circumstance: "If I didn't know for sure that we were in America, I might have thought we were in Brod or in Lemberg. The same Jews, the same women, the same noise, the same dirt." But above all, Jewishness was Mottel, the image of the adaptability, resilience, energy, resourcefulness, and—most important—the *durability* of the Jew.

The Jews of Eastern Europe considered childhood a phase to be got over as quickly as possible, a sort of malignant disease the curing of which justified the use of any means, no matter how drastic. Consequently, Mottel's relation to the world—like that of the Jews to the peoples around them—is one of conflict, the battle between an irrepressible child and adults who can neither understand nor tolerate him, a world to which his very existence is an offense. "According to them, everything is mischief. To tie a piece of paper on a cat's tail in order to make her spin is mischief. To bang a stick on a priest's fence and make all the dogs run out is mischief."

Indeed, mischief—that for which you get a beating—comes to mean by definition any-

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thing Mottel happens to do. He whistles and is trounced; he takes a ride on a goat's back and is rewarded with a punch in the teeth; he goes fishing and almost has one of his ears torn off by an indignant elder brother trying to "make a man of him." But making a man of Mottel seems to consist only in slapping him around and threatening to "finish him off" altogether in another moment. Miraculously, something always intervenes to save him: "I've rarely seen my brother in such a rage. He rushed at me ready to tear me apart with his bare hands. Luckily for me, he sneezed just in time, else I'd be a cripple for life."

Only on two occasions does life become safe. The first is when his father dies: "'*Your* luck that you are an orphan!' says Leibkeh to me, 'else I'd break you, hand and foot. You may believe that I'm not lying!' I believe him. I know that no one will touch me because I am an orphan. It's grand to be an orphan!" The other crazy reversal of his fortunes is in America, the place where "everything is possible," where "the small can become big, the lowly great, and the dead practically come to life," and where—miracle of miracles—"*parents* get punished for their children's mischief." "Try not to love such a country," says Mottel. The adults, of course, don't appreciate it as he does. "America," they say, "is a free country; everyone is making a living, and having a terrible time."

The adult world, then, is a great tissue of absurdities to the child. The absurdity comes out in many ways. For example, in Mottel's eyes the whole of reality is a Garden of Eden like Mrs. Doctor's garden in Kassrilovka:

"What can't you find in this garden! Apples and pears and cherries and plums and gooseberries and currants and peaches and morellos and raspberries and blackberries—what else do you want? . . . [But] Heaven preserve you from asking her [even] for a sunflower! . . . She finds it easier to pluck a tooth out of her mouth than a sunflower out of her garden."

There it all is, offering itself to him, yet Mottel is kept out of the garden by a high fence with horrible spikes and a dog that must really, he thinks, be a wolf. Now why on earth shouldn't he be allowed to pluck a fruit or two from the trees? Fruit was obviously made to be eaten before it gets too ripe, when it's still sour enough to make your lips pucker. But this fruit will never be eaten, not by Mottel or anyone else; it winds up as mouldy jam in Mrs. Doctor's cellar. Why should this be? There's no reason, it makes no sense, no more, that is, than the cuffings he gets on every page:

"What does she need so much jam for, in heaven's name? If you ask her, she doesn't know herself. It's simply her nature. It's too late, you can't change her. All she knows is that when summertime comes, she's *got* to start cooking jam."

This conception of reality as insanely irrational is common to the comic literature of oppressed peoples. We have lately seen it in Ralph Ellison's novel about the Negroes, but it has a long history behind it. With varying degrees of success, Defoe, Smollett, Disraeli, and Dickens all work from such a conception when they write the comedy of the poor. What is unusual about Sholom Aleichem is that he makes the absurd malevolence of the world all part of the fun and richness of living. This is a way of accepting life even when life is most niggardly in its gifts. And it is an attitude that strikes me as quintessentially Jewish, the perfect comic expression of a culture in which theology—i.e., the attempt to understand the problem of evil in rational terms—never flourished. Like Mottel's—and like Job's—the privations and sufferings of the Jews bore no relation whatever to anything they did; they suffered only because of what they *were*. And despite the attempts from time to time by pseudo-theologians to make sense of a classically senseless situation, the Jewish answer was still the answer of the Book of Job—that there is no answer. And if there is no answer, one can either rage like a Dostoevsky, or laugh. Sholom Aleichem laughed. His laughter has something to teach modern apologists for Original Sin who believe that optimism and a love of life must necessarily reflect superficiality of spirit.

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THE STUDY OF MAN

GERMAN HISTORIANS' VERDICT ON HITLER

This Time No "Stab-in-the-Back"

H. L. TREFOUSSE

ONE of the gravest dangers faced by democratic elements in Germany in 1945 was the possible revival of a Hitler myth. Would another revisionist school of historians arise as in 1920, again attempting to prove that Germany had not only been wantonly attacked, but also criminally cheated of victory? Once more an alleged stab in the back by traitorous elements at home might be the national alibi for the defeat of a "successful" army in the field: Nazism would be whitewashed, and the way opened for its restoration.

In eight years since Germany's unconditional surrender, the country is once more being built up, and many nationalist and quasi-open neo-Nazi movements of all kinds have sprung up east of the Rhine. Nevertheless, no major revisionist history has appeared there, nor any theory devised to absolve the Nazi government of war guilt and create another stab-in-the-back legend. Considering the utter catastrophe which overwhelmed the Reich in 1945, a débâcle compared to which the defeat of 1918 and the Treaty of Versailles seem mild, this phenomenon is remarkable, and possibly encouraging.

The works of such contemporary German writers as Jürgen Thorwald, Walter Görlitz, and Herbert A. Quint* demonstrate this development, and evidence that, in spite of all the neo-nationalist and neo-Nazi activity in West Germany, there has been no serious revival of the Hitler cult. All three squarely meet the problem of the "Führer's" contribution to German history and unhesitatingly arrive at a devastating verdict.

The man whom they had been taught to revere for twelve long years, to whom millions had sworn a "holy" oath as soldiers, and for whom they had sacrificed so much, failed them utterly in the end. The demi-god revealed himself to be a very fallible as well as wicked and wanton mortal. It became painfully obvious that he had not even been interested fundamentally in the welfare of the Fatherland, but primarily in his own survival and power. He had failed to find a solution that could save the Reich from complete disaster; and he had added insult to injury by asserting that the

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H. L. TREFOUSSE here reviews a collection of books on the Second World War recently published in Germany, with a view to discovering whether fears of the rise of a new "stab-in-the-back" myth in which Hitler and his Nazi gang might be absolved of responsibility for Germany's cataclysmic defeat are justified. Mr. Tréfousse was born in Germany in 1921, came to this country at the age of fifteen, and received the B.A. degree from the College of the City of New York and the Ph.D. degree in history from Columbia University. He is an instructor in history at Brooklyn College, and the author of *Germany and American Neutrality, 1939-41*, published in 1951.

*Jürgen Thorwald, *Es begann an der Weichsel*, Stuttgart, Steingruben Verlag, 1950, 372 pp.

Jürgen Thorwald, *Das Ende an der Elbe*, Stuttgart, Steingruben Verlag, 1950, 426 pp.

Jürgen Thorwald, *Die ungeklärten Falle*, Stuttgart, Steingruben Verlag, 1950, 254 pp.

Jürgen Thorwald, editor, Joachim Schultz, *Die letzten 30 Tage*, Stuttgart, Steingruben Verlag, 1951, 132 pp.

Herbert A. Quint, *Die Wendepunkte des Krieges*, Stuttgart, Steingruben Verlag, 1950, 260 pp.

Walter Görlitz, *Der Zweite Weltkrieg*, 1939-1945, Volume II, Stuttgart, Steingruben Verlag, 1952, 624 pp.

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German people did not deserve to survive it they could not win *his* war for him.

In sum, these German authors lay the blame for the Third Reich's collapse on Hitler's profound irresponsibility and ultimate and abysmal incompetence in the self-assumed roles of warlord and statesman, a realization inescapable to all serious students of the last period of the war. After their sweeping indictment, it will prove extremely difficult for any neo-Nazi to find some scapegoat to rehabilitate the "Führer."

ALL three writers are quite specific in their condemnation of Hitler. From the military point of view, Görlitz and Thorwald emphasize his blundering strategic moves in 1944 and 1945. His orders to defend every inch of ground, his unwillingness to consent to the most reasonable and necessary withdrawals, and his demand that every occupied town be held as a fortress regardless of its relation to the main battleline, made any real effort at defense impossible. His insistence on keeping an army group in Latvia after the Russians had already penetrated into the Reich itself offers the most glaring example of his callous indifference to the fate of the inhabitants of Germany.

A second count in the indictment of Hitler is his irrational hatred of the German General Staff. Always wary of the army, already suspicious of its leaders after the failure to take Moscow in the late autumn of 1941, he became obsessed with resentment against the military after the attempt on his life of July 20, 1944. He seriously crippled the Nazi war effort by his fears, vindictiveness, and personnel policies. His insistence upon faith in ultimate victory made any reasonable planning within the limits of concrete possibilities high treason, and German military and political leadership, in Hitler's hands, became increasingly divorced from reality.

Last but not least, Hitler stands accused, in the eyes of his own followers, of failure to seek a political escape from the calamities of defeat—an escape Nazi and other Germans felt could be found by exploiting the strains and stresses of the "strange" alliance between the Communist East and the democratic West. According to this view, Germany should have gradually given way on her Western front from 1944 on. By concentrating her forces against the Russians instead, she would have been able to halt them. The United States and Great Britain would then have been faced with the task of occupying a country no longer in arms against them. Stalin would have become suspicious, and the fondest hope of many Germans—a head-on collision between their two groups of enemies—might have been fulfilled.

Here, however, the criticism is not so well grounded. The obvious fact that Hitler and his entourage hoped for the very same thing should be kept more clearly in mind by those Germans who still, in retrospect, support this line of reasoning. Willingly perhaps, they forget how horrified the world was by their regime. Nor do they give sufficient weight to the additional fact that the Western powers were prepared to go to almost any length to appease Russia as long as Japan remained undefeated. On the contrary, they feel that Hitler's "refusal" to make a deal with the West delivered millions of Germans into the hands of the Russian invader.

PERHAPS even more significant is the fact that there are German historians, by no means pro-Allied and certainly not pro-Communist, who are prepared to go much further. Not only do they blame Hitler for his failure to win the war, and for the follies that brought on the collapse; they also call him to account for starting the conflict in the first place. Herbert Quint, for example, asserts unequivocally that that rash step constituted Hitler's most fatal mistake. This conclusion is especially remarkable in view of the fact that it is contained in a book primarily devoted to "crucial turning points" of the war, the very incidents in which some Germans have tried to find the "real" reason for their country's defeat.

Quint blames Hitler for failing to exploit to the limit his strategic advantage at Dunkirk, thereby enabling the British to save their army. He also blames him for not sending Rommel enough arms or supplies for the conquest of Egypt; for not sufficiently encouraging scientific research, thus permitting the Allies to stumble upon radar first; for strategic blunders in Russia in 1941; and for irresponsible tactics in face of the Allied invasion in 1944. But Quint makes it quite clear that none of these isolated instances, singly or together, caused Germany's downfall. That, he maintains, was the result of Hitler's initial defiance of political and military reality by beginning a war that was as unnecessary as it was foolhardy.

It is heartening to know that postwar German historians have found the true cause for

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their country's predicament: its criminal and irresponsible leadership from 1933 to 1945. If this point can be made to stick, German democracy will have gained an important advantage over its detractors, and these three authors will have merited the gratitude of the West.

YET, if responsible Germans have not hesitated to accept Hitler's guilt for war and defeat, it must not be assumed that they have shown themselves ready to rewrite their entire history. On the contrary, their very readiness to accept Hitler as the chief culprit has made it comparatively easy for them to absolve almost all his collaborators, with the possible exception of the inner core of the Nazi party. In this way, a great many generals and government officials have been rehabilitated as valiant defenders of the Fatherland against its foes both at the front and in the Chancellory. This thesis, however vulnerable to the facts, has real dangers.

The evil nature of the Nazi regime had been revealed long before the outbreak of the war. It was clearly expressed in the party program and in *Mein Kampf*; atrocities against Jews and other opponents of the regime began in 1933, and concentration camps antedated by many years the attack upon Poland. Those who still harbored doubts should have had their eyes opened by the murders of Schleicher, Roehm, and almost a thousand others in June 1934; Hitler's ruthlessness and utter disregard of commonly accepted standards of morality were clearly exposed in that "incident." It is hard, at least for non-Germans, to see how any of the people—like Engineer Todt, for example—whom Quint describes as drawn to Hitler for purely "idealistic" reasons were unable to discover his betrayal of their ideals until 1943 at the earliest.

The three writers at hand generally disregard these factors. Writing chiefly for a German public, they want to flatter German national pride, and this endeavor is greatly simplified by their blanket rejection of Hitler, who takes on something of the role of a scapegoat for all German sins. Especially does their emphasis upon him as the chief agent of ruin enable them to save, and even enhance, the reputations of the other German leaders who collaborated with him in success if not in defeat.

One of the ways this is done is by stressing the theme of the "crusade" against Bolshevism —and it is here that we may be well advised to watch for the feared, dangerous whitewash of Nazi monstrousness. The atrocities committed by the advancing Red soldiers are described in such gruesome detail as to make the reeling Nazi armies appear as the last defenders of Western civilization against the onslaught of barbarian hordes; German commanders are made to look like knights in shining armor struggling valiantly for a noble cause against superhuman odds, misunderstood by the West and betrayed by their own criminal overlord. This brazen picture of the Nazi armies going down to defeat as last-ditch defenders of morality and civilization is transparently false; yet it is probable that most Germans will be fully convinced that such was indeed the role of their soldiers during the Second World War.

Once this line of reasoning is followed, the perpetrators of the attempted *coup* of July 20, 1944 against Hitler, are placed in a most unfavorable light. Von Rundstedt and Guderian tend to emerge as the heroes, instead of von Witzleben and von Stauffenberg—true, not because they supported Hitler; but on the grounds that they considered the defense of the Fatherland more important than the removal of its suicidal dictator. Even the obvious military folly of resistance to the bitter end, long after all hope of averting total defeat had vanished, can be excused in this way. After all, could von Rundstedt and Guderian have been expected to surrender to Russians? Thus the Western powers are made to appear as utter simpletons, unable or unwilling to realize the seriousness of the Red peril. Görlitz is especially bitter about President Roosevelt's attempts to appease Stalin, and condemns severely General Eisenhower's refusal to grant special armistice terms to the German army in order to enable it to escape Red captivity.

THUS the horrors of the Russian invasion of Germany, and the consequent emergence of Communism as a threat to the free world equal to Hitler's, offer the possibility for the emergence of a new myth justifying, to some extent, Germany's role in the war. The anti-Communist line taken by most West German writers is sure to strike a responsive chord in the West as the increasingly heavy burden of the cold war leads some people to wonder whether we really gained anything from victory over Hitler with Stalin's aid. A few feel that the Communists today constitute a greater menace to Western civilization than the Nazis did

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in 1939, and they deplore what they call Roosevelt's naivety in supporting the former in order to destroy the latter. The Third Reich, it is said, served as a bulwark against Bolshevism: the West's destruction of that bulwark brought about the perilous situation in which it now finds itself.

Three recent German books, Jürgen Thorwald's *Whom They Wish to Destroy,* Peter Kleist's *Between Hitler and Stalin,* and Heinz Guderian's *Memories of a Soldier** concern themselves with this theme either directly or indirectly. The authors take the position that the German army was the defender of European civilization against Soviet barbarism—a barbarism which now threatens to envelop the entire world. They castigate the West for its failure to comprehend this and at the same time to recognize the true implications of the expansion of Soviet power. All three writers complain that the Allied policy of unconditional surrender rendered any negotiated peace with the West impossible, and they say that this, in effect, made the Anglo-Saxon powers accomplices of Soviet barbarism in Eastern Germany.

General Guderian, one-time Chief of General Staff and famous for his exploits as a tank commander, uses these arguments to justify his refusal to cooperate with the German underground and his acceptance of a leading position in the Nazi army after July 20, 1944. Stressing his role as a defender of Europe against unspeakable horrors, he maintains that he had no alternative but to fight to the finish as long as the Western powers continued to insist upon unconditional surrender in the East as well as in the West. He even attacks the anti-Nazi conspirators of July 1944 for undertaking a plot for which they were ill prepared and which could only result in weakening the German defense on the Eastern front.

Thorwald and Kleist, however, also criticize Hitler and his entourage for not making sufficient use of the anti-Communist elements in the Soviet Union who welcomed the German armies at first. Failure to exploit the enormous potential of this opposition, they hold, was a major factor in Germany's ultimate defeat in the East. These different interpretations, however, serve only to emphasize further the contention of all three writers that Communism was a far worse evil than Nazism, and their charge that the West failed to realize this.

THIS hypothesis may be challenging and may even seem plausible today, when we are faced with Communist aggression and provocations in all parts of the world. But at the time of the outbreak of World War II the most immediate and conspicuous threat to peace, security, and the established order came from Berlin, not Moscow. In spite of the *Führer's* belief in German racial superiority and his known desire to extend German power and influence over other peoples, a veritable fascist international had arisen, inspired by Berlin yet inviting the support of non-German, non-Nordic, and even some "non-Aryan" peoples. Democratic institutions had been abandoned in many places; even in distant Japan theories of Aryan supremacy had not prevented native totalitarians from joining in with Hitler. And wherever fascist or semi-fascist states had emerged, they had exhibited unmistakable pro-German tendencies. The balance of power had been tipped dangerously against the democracies.

The situation with regard to Russia was quite different. To be sure, the evil nature of the Communist regime had already become obvious. Vast blood-lettings of endless monotony and cruelty had disgusted the free world. The one-party state was as evident in Russia as in Germany. Concentration camps existed in the Soviet Union as well as in the Third Reich. But all these abuses were still confined to the country of their origin. While Hitler had extended his sway over thousands of square miles of non-German territory, Stalin had been unable to push the limits of the Communist state beyond the Russian boundaries of 1924. While Hitler had found imitators who successfully toppled parliamentary regimes in country after country, Stalin's disciples had been unable to win power in a single place outside Russia. At the very moment when the world was being amazed by the rapid development of the Wehrmacht and the thorough militarization of the Reich, the Red Army was seriously weakened by vast purges. The Communists had staked their hopes for revolution on the Great Depres-

*Jürgen Thorwald, *Wen sie verderben wollen,* Stuttgart, Steingruben Verlag, 1952, 606 pp.
Peter Kleist, *Zwischen Hitler und Stalin: 1939-45,* Bonn, Athenaum Verlag, 1950, 344 pp.
Heinz Guderian, *Erinnerungen eines Soldaten,* Heidelberg, Kurt Vowinckel, 1951, 464 pp. Published in translation in the U.S. as *Panzer Leader,* Dutton, 1952, 528 pp.

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sion: yet it was the fascists who were reaping the revolutionary fruits of that catastrophe.

Yet even during the Polish crisis in 1939, Great Britain and France were still so afraid of Soviet Russia that they refused to permit the Red Army to pass through non-Communist territories without the consent of the countries concerned. The Germans had no such compunctions.

Indeed—and this crucial fact is studiously ignored—it was they who unleashed the Red power by signing a non-aggression pact with Stalin, and this pact gave him his first real chance to expand westward. When Hitler attacked Poland, the Western powers had no alternative but to honor their obligations. The Nazis and Communists were bound by a treaty of friendship, and the democracies were not even given the chance to choose between them. By the time Hitler decided to break his pact with the Kremlin, he had already upset the balance of power to such an extent and had furnished such proof of the evil he intended to wreak on the world that the largely Conservative members of the British government breathed a sigh of relief when they found Russia on their side at last.

America, too, was no longer in a position to choose. Not Russia, but Japan had overrun China and was invading Southeastern Asia; nor was it Russia, but Germany which was linked to Japan by the Tripartite Pact. The Axis, not the Comintern, constituted the more immediate menace, and the United States, like Great Britain, decided to cope with the first threat first.

In view of all this, it is not surprising that the West, to say the least, took a rather dim view of Hitler's anti-Bolshevik "crusade." Once the democracies had met the German army in battle, all other considerations were subordinated to its defeat. And they felt less concern about the Communist peril to Eastern Europe than about the possibility of a rapprochement between the two totalitarian governments. Dr. Kleist's book shows that such fears were not unfounded. During trips to Sweden in 1943 this German official in Ribbentrop's service was approached several times by persons close to the Soviet embassy in an effort to sound out the possibilities of a separate peace. The negotiations failed because of Hitler's, not Stalin's, reluctance, but the possibility of their success was a factor that had to be considered by the Allies.

General Guderian's portrait of himself as a servant of Western civilization is also somewhat dimmed by these revelations. He says he did not know about Himmler's murder camps because the Nazis showed a positive "genius" in concealing them from the German public; but he must surely have known about their "standard" concentration camps. He certainly knew that wherever Hitler's power reached Jews were being arrested, imprisoned, and deported. And his own description of how he handed Brest-Litovsk over to the Soviet army in 1939 may serve as a useful reminder that it was not the West, but Germany which first enabled the Russians to Communize new provinces at a time when no one in high authority in the countries then at war with the Reich had yet thought of demanding unconditional surrender.

Thorwald believes that the Nazi leadership's great delay in forming a "free" Russian government and army under German auspices constituted one of Hitler's gravest errors. He is especially perturbed about the fate of General Andrei Vlassov, to whom he devotes the major part of his book. Vlassov went over to the Germans after a brilliant career in the Red Army that terminated with his capture by the Germans in 1942. The author deplores the Nazi government's initially unfriendly attitude toward the renegade general, but Hitler's ill will was not the only cause of Vlassov's failure. The small army the Germans eventually helped him recruit consisted of Russian prisoners of war willing to fight on the side of Nazi Germany for the "liberation" of their motherland. But these soldiers were rendered unredeemably suspect, and radically disqualified for any role as liberators, not because of errors on the part of German leadership, but simply because of the fundamental nature of the Nazi regime by which they were sponsored and protected.

What Thorwald does not sufficiently stress —though he is more aware of it than the other writers—is that Hitler never had the slightest intention of liberating Russia in the first place; it was not for that that he invaded her, and it was not a reason that he could have used to justify to the German public the cost in lives of his Russian campaign. Nor did he wish to obligate himself in any way to the Russian or non-Russian subjects of the Soviet Union by accepting their aid. He wanted to make Russia a colony (as he himself said, Germany's "In-

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dia"), a source of raw materials, a reservoir of slave labor, and living space for surplus German population. His racial dogmas, according to which the Slavs were an inferior people, would have made it difficult in any case for the Nazi regime to convert Soviet subjects into dependable allies; as time went by the most that regime could do was kidnap them for forced labor. The wonder is—and it can be explained only by the intolerableness of Stalin's regime—that so many Soviet citizens actually did volunteer for service with the German armies.

Vlassov wanted to free his homeland from one tyrant with the aid of another.* But as soon as he had allied himself with the Nazis, he became an enemy of the West—and of humanity. The democracies refused to have anything to do with him, not because of their unwillingness to recognize a Russian anti-Stalinist patriot, but because of their determination not to maintain friendly contact with a Nazi general, under whatever guise he might appear. Vlassov may not have had any Nazi convictions, yet he was sponsored by Himmler and must have been aware of the consequences of such sponsorship as far as the Allies were concerned. The Russian general thought Nazism the lesser of two evils; the contrary opinion, that Stalin was the lesser, was then in the ascendency in the West, and Vlassov had to pay the penalty. And so at the end of the war, the American army let him pass from their hands to the Soviets, who executed him as a traitor.

IN SPITE of these considerations, it may still be argued, however, that the German authors have a point. Stalinism may not be worse than Hitlerism, but it is just as bad, and America may merely have exchanged one peril for another. This line of reasoning loses sight of the fact that Roosevelt's choice of allies during the Second World War has paid dividends after all. If the United States had refused to support the Russians against the Germans, the Nazis would probably have won. Then the Axis would have been supreme from Portugal to Japan. This power complex would have been so overwhelming that it might have become impossible to offer effective resistance to its inevitable further expansion. Meanwhile countless numbers would have gone on dying in Himmler's "installations" far faster than they ever would have in Malenkov's. The decision to collaborate fully with all external foes of the Hitler regime prevented the greater calamity. Although a great portion of Europe and Asia has since been overwhelmed by a Red dictatorship as sinister as the Brown, Western Europe, Southern Asia, and Japan have been saved for the free world, and possession of these areas may well prove decisive in the struggle between totalitarianism and democracy.

TAKEN as a whole, these German interpretations of recent history will probably be more popular within Germany than outside. Non-Germans will be pleased by the rejection of Hitler; they will be interested in the Wehrmacht's military experiences in Russia, but they will find it difficult to sympathize with, or even understand, the final tragedy of the non- or ex-Nazi servants of the Nazi regime. Nor will the undertone of self-pity that runs through so many German accounts of the last war strike them as warranted.

Unquestionably, horrors were visited upon the population of East Germany by the Soviet armies, but they pale in comparison with the fate of the Jews, Gypsies, and countless other people wantonly and systematically murdered by Germans. It may be pointless to compare atrocities, but outside Germany such comparisons will be difficult to avoid. Most readers are still too emotionally involved to be able to estimate the meaning of that conflict with that complete objectivity which these German authors ask for but fail to achieve themselves. What remains clear to the West is that Hitler's regime was a plague and had to be destroyed. The Soviet regime may be an equal plague, but at least we have a choice in the measures we can take against it such as Hitler did not permit us.

Still, these German books do contain elements of encouragement. The Nazis drove a formidable wedge between the mind of Germany and that of the West. The gap they created seemed at first well-nigh unbridgeable. If some German writers have succeeded in detaching themselves sufficiently from their own

*Efforts on the part of captured Germans to free the Fatherland from Hitler with Russian aid offer an interesting counterpart to Vlassov's. Bismarck's grandson, Count Heinrich von Einsiedel, in his recent book, *I Joined the Russians* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1953, 306 pp.), shows how some Germans' hopes of collaboration with the Red Army ended in bitter disappointment at the hour of victory. Stalin, too, was not interested in the liberation of Germany; he intended to create a Communist satellite to serve his own purposes.

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past to realize that Hitler led them to perdition and that men in German uniform committed, on official orders, unpardonable crimes at home and abroad, they demonstrate that the gap is being narrowed after all. It is to be hoped that future historians in Germany will be able to understand and purge themselves still further of their unhappy history, so that German thought may again make a decent contribution to the world.

DU, MEINE WELT

(Schubert)

DACHINE RAINER

And you my nightingale world, sing
In the green gardens: live in Persian paintings
Lush, minute, intense. O you world, frolicking
Down the huge galleries of eternity
When the seas rise and the drowning moon swims toward shore
On your feasting lips rock and couple with the burning stars
How I do praise thee, Lord, for thy slow fires and my long dying.

The stars are radiant and the pursuing heaven their shining
Continent. In the thundering climb up the well of the wandering
World, I come upon you, dark, moss-covered, seeking
The constant trial, love's white eternity.
Within the expedient world, on all its sleeping shores
I seek your intransigent arms. Beyond the vagrant stars
I praise thee, Lord, for thy slow fires and my long dying.

The green fish sing in the multiple seas
The frogs thrum and splash in fickle ponds
From love's giant waterfalls into her round lakes
In the full air birds swim washed by tides of the moon
And in the earth the singing worms soothe our feasting soul
How I do praise thee, Lord, for thy slow fires and my long dying.

And you, my world, my mourning dove
Gray dust on the creeping earth
Time, upon your feasting mouth stopped
Caught within the web of love
Purple time, dear bright insect of desire,
Glorious time, green, rustling bird of Paradise,
How I do praise thee, Lord, for thy slow fires and my long dying.

DACHINE RAINER is a young poetess whose work has appeared in many magazines. She lives in Bearsville, Ulster County, N. Y.

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LETTERS FROM READERS

Silent Witnesses

To the Editor of Commentary:

Alan F. Westin believes that "complete responsiveness" to the prying of Congressional inquisitors—even to the naming of names of former acquaintances whose loyalty has not hitherto been placed under suspicion—is the course of "profoundest wisdom" ("Do Silent Witnesses Defend Civil Liberties," June 1953). He believes, further, that condemnation of informers by liberals is "neither understandable nor defensible; in that they encourage silence and discourage speaking out, they do a great disservice to liberalism and civil liberties."

Laurent B. Frantz and Norman Redlich, on the other hand, believe that a witness who exercises his constitutional right to refuse to answer on Fifth Amendment grounds is choosing the only legal and moral alternative left to him under present-day conditions. ("Does Silence Mean Guilt?," *The Nation,* June 6, 1953). . . .

I suggest that the cause of civil liberties will not be advanced either by criticizing witnesses who inform or by criticizing witnesses who plead the privilege in order to avoid informing, or because they think that that is an effective way to obstruct the committee. There are circumstances where informing is the better alternative. I believe, for example, that James Wechsler was justified in naming names, since only by doing so could he reveal McCarthy's dangerous methods and objectives. . . . On the other hand, I cannot help feeling a moral revulsion against informing, particularly where the informer does so only to save his own skin.

As the authors of both articles intimated, the solution to the problem cannot be found solely in a change in the applicable legal rules covering the situation: there must also be a fundamental change in public opinion of such a nature that the public in general would disapprove of the use of inquisitorial techniques in the area of private ideas and associations unrelated to violations of criminal laws. Granting this, a change in the pertinent legal rules will go a long way to bring about the desirable public opinion. I believe that the cause of civil liberties in this field will be most effectively advanced by favorable Supreme Court rulings on the following three points:

(1) The free speech, free press, and free assembly guarantees of the First Amendment do limit the scope of Congressional investigations and do insure a right to privacy for political associations. Consequently, if the inevitable effect of a question is to limit free discussion or free assembly, it is improper on First Amendment grounds.

(2) The Constitution prohibits bills of attainder (legislative acts inflicting punishment without fair trials and the customary judicial safeguards of cross-examination, etc.) and provides for a separation of the legislative and judicial arms of the government. Consequently, if the purpose and inevitable effect of a question put to a witness at a Congressional committee hearing is to inflict punishment upon the witness, the question is improper because of the legislature's Constitutional incapacity to inflict punishment.

(3) The doctrine of "waiver" has no place in an investigatory proceeding; a person should be able to claim the privilege at any point in the line of questioning, notwithstanding his answers to previous questions.

A tall order? Perhaps so. But not as impossibly so as some people might think. The Supreme Court indicated, in the recent Rumely case, that the First Amendment does limit, in some way, the investigative powers of Congress. Justices Douglas and Black, in their concurring opinion, stated:

"The power of investigation is . . . limited. Inquiry into personal and private affairs is precluded. . . . And so is any matter in respect to which no valid legislation could be had. . . ."

. . . The difficulty, of course, is that the only method of getting the Supreme Court to rule in the question is by way of an indictment for contempt of Congress, with the chance that the unlucky individual involved will end up in jail. But what are the alternatives? Westin says to answer all questions—whether proper or improper. Frantz and Redlich say to refuse to answer on Fifth Amendment grounds. I cannot see how either course will really solve the problem. There *must* be a judicial determination that certain kinds of questions cannot be asked in a democracy.

Abbott Gould

New York City

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The Vienna Cemetery

To the Editor of Commentary:

Robert Pick in "The Vienna of the Departed" (August) refers to the custom of Jewish expellees "in the Middle Ages" of trying to protect their cemeteries from destruction. One significant incident of this kind took place in 1670 in the same Vienna Mr. Pick describes. When at that time the long-threatened expulsion of the Jews was delayed, the clergy effectively interpreted a miscarriage of the Empress as a sign of heavenly disfavor over the continued presence of the Jews, and eventually they were driven out under the pretext of being in league with "the Swedes." The Frankl brothers then purchased the cemetery for 4,000 gulden. This action preserved the tombstones, many of which are of high artistic quality and which became an important source of data on the history of the Vienna community. In 1938 I visited this cemetery in the Seegasse where some of my ancestors are buried, and I recall the tragic lack of premonition on the part of some Viennese Jews that in a few weeks they, too, would become expellees. Hitler varied the pretext slightly. . . .

Ernest Maass

Forest Hills, New York

Ancient Jewish Art

To the Editor of Commentary:

In Leo Steinberg's "Bible Age Relics and Jewish Art" (August) are drawn startling conclusions about the art of the ancient Jews. Unproductive, imitative, untalented, naive, inept —are the judgments based on an exhibition which is the result not of thorough, careful archeological work, but reflecting rather "the hectic building activity in the new state." I attest to the accuracy of the latter statement, having recently returned from Israel, and seen how simple it is to dig up Roman and Greek art-crafts especially along the seacoast.

But, to dismiss the art of a people who created the most deeply moving spiritual structures as imitative and puerile, on the basis of a hastily unearthed collection of artcrafts, does scant justice to scholarship and even less to this ancient people. To accept the theory that their feelings of awe and majesty of the human and divine they could only express in words and not in art symbols, is to say that these people were only half human.

There is ample evidence to the contrary. The chapters of Kings and Chronicles in the Bible are rich in description of the grandeur of the art products created by Jewish artists to the glory of their Faith. These descriptions are not fanciful tales by latter-day writers. In the book *Ages in Chaos* by I. Velikovsky is described the Temple of Deir el Bahari near Thebes, which pictures the gifts given by Solomon to Queen Hatshepsut (Queen of Sheba). [He also] describes the bas-reliefs on the walls of the Karnak Temple in Egypt, in which are pictured the treasures brought by Thutmose III after sacking the Temple of Jerusalem.

For the past hundred years, Bible criticism has tended to derogate the role of the ancient Hebrews as an obscure group whose memories and influence survived because of their passionate devotion to a religious and spiritual idea, but without important political, military, or cultural influence. . . . The time has come when serious art criticism should address itself to correcting another of the derogations which have clung so tenaciously to the memory of a people whose influence was great in its own day in all phases of the human spirit.

David Arons

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Youth of All Nations

To the Editor of Commentary:

One appeal from an Ohio member of Youth of All Nations, and one from a "YOAN-er" in Kiriat Borocov, Israel, prompt, in turn, this appeal to readers of Commentary to extend the value of that excellent magazine.

Linda of Ohio (age fifteen) writes how happy she was at seeing, after quite a wait, an envelope from a letter-pal in Israel. Then the lament: "This letter would be only the second I had received from her. And I was really hurt to have her ask me to send her comics and movie magazines. Frankly, I feel sorry for her if all the literature that she can enjoy are these types of magazines. I would be glad to send her something that might help her. . . ."

YOAN is a non-political, non-profit membership organization which has been praised in Congress for its program of helping the young to understand nations and cultures other than their own, through the only medium readily available to the vast majority of mankind—the international mails. . . .

Whoever wants the name and address of a YOAN-er waiting for magazines (this includes many a teacher, too), please send us a self-addressed—and *stamped*, please—envelope, and say whether you wish to send your copies to Israel or elsewhere (requests for periodicals are also heavy from Europe and Asia).

Clara Leiser

Youth of All Nations, 16 St. Luke's Place
New York City

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

The Geography of Isolationism

AMERICA FIRST: THE BATTLE AGAINST INTERVENTION; 1940-41. By WAYNE S. COLE. University of Wisconsin, 305 pp., $3.50.

Reviewed by NATHAN GLAZER

THIS book, the first full-length study of the America First Committee, describes events that took place only a dozen years ago, and in the full blaze of publicity. Yet they read here as if they might have taken place a half century ago. It is amazing how many of the figures who played so important a role in those days are gone; not only Roosevelt and Hopkins and Ickes, but Senators Nye, Wheeler, Borah, and Robert La Follette, Jr., General Hugh Johnson and William Allen White. And of those who remain, how many are now at fiercest odds with their old positions: Chester A. Bowles was a member of the national committee of America First; William Benton, then a vice-president of the University of Chicago, gave advice to R. Douglas Stuart, Jr., its youthful founder; Philip A. Jessup sponsored America First chapters.

The political landscape is so altered as to be unrecognizable: is it conceivable that the lower house of the Texas legislature once voted that Charles A. Lindbergh was unwelcome in that state—and that ten years later the same house listened worshipfully to General Douglas MacArthur?

The points of continuity between that political epoch and our own are no less interesting; the son of America First's biggest backer, Henry Regnery, now runs a publishing house justifying the isolationist position, and ramifying out to attack contemporary liberalism, Godlessness, and our policy towards our former enemies in the last war. Another backer, C. R. Sheaffer, has recently turned up as a financial backer of Senator McCarthy—and more recently still as Assistant Secretary of Commerce in the Eisenhower administration. A more tenuous line may be drawn from R. Douglas Stuart, Jr., the Yale Law School student who started the movement and served as its executive secretary and the new Undersecretary of State for the Eisenhower administration, Donald B. Lourie—who was president of the firm of which the senior Stuart was vice-president.

It is not easy, even with the meticulously collected and reported detail of Mr. Cole's study, to place America First in the context of American history. What it was not, we know. It was no fascist movement—though certainly fascists joined it and spoke under its auspices. It was not even simply a reactionary political movement. Besides Bowles, Benton, and Jessup, we might point to Norman Thomas, who often spoke from its platforms, and Oswald Garrison Villard, who served on its executive committee. But certainly its support was violently anti-Roosevelt and overwhelmingly anti-New Deal. Nor was it an anti-Semitic movement—the notorious speech of Charles Lindbergh was repudiated by the Committee—though, again, anti-Semites flocked to it.

IT WAS the expression of Midwest isolationism. But what was Midwest isolationism?

It has had as kaleidoscopic a career as any phenomenon in American history—and is as hard to pin down. At the beginning of the century, when the country was debating whether to take over Spanish colonies and launch into a career of imperialism, it was the Midwest, as a historian writing in the *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* has pointed out, that supplied the leading protagonists of "internationalism" and a "global" destiny for America—President McKinley, Secretary of State Hay, Albert J. Beveridge, Mark Hanna, and many other spokesmen of the new course were Midwesterners, and the Midwest, from Ohio to the Dakotas, voted for the Spanish-American treaty. Then it was the Democrats who were isolationist. Contemporary Midwest isolationism did not

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begin to show itself until World War I. That isolationism was in some measure simply a reflection of the unwillingness of German immigrants and their children to fight against Germany, as Samuel Lubell has recently pointed out, and as students analyzing the constituencies of those who voted against our entry into World War I had shown earlier. Yet the South, despite its traditional sympathy for England, pre-dating the Civil War, was as anti-war in World War I as the Midwest. Only in World War II does the present configuration fully emerge: the South becomes the most interventionist section of the country, against a strongly isolationist Midwest.

These larger movements are, unfortunately, quite ignored in Mr. Cole's study—he keeps his nose pretty close to the grindstone, which in this case admittedly consists of the fascinating store of America First files, and he rarely raises it to consider the larger context and significance of America First. Today, with isolationism again a major historical force, it becomes important to determine just what the enduring elements of Midwest isolationism are.

DURING the debate at the turn of the century, the issue in foreign policy was imperialistic expansionism promising unlimited trade, which was enthusiastically taken up by Republican businessmen, Eastern and Midwestern, and suspiciously resisted by Populist and Democratic farmers. In the First World War, the same lines held, with the Roosevelt wing of the Republican party and the pro-British upper-class businessmen being most enthusiastic in favor of the war. The old areas of Populist strength—the Midwest and the South—stuck to their isolationist guns. To anti-business feeling was added a suspicion of England and the pro-English upper classes of the East, which itself had both ethnic and regional roots. But, since anti-England and anti-Eastern feeling had entered the scene, the solid front of "interventionalist" Republican businessmen of McKinley's time was broken, and the Midwest businessmen began to show a slight tendency to isolationism. In this fight, the Democratic administration was in the middle. But once Wilson got into the war, the character of American overseas interests quite changed—it was transformed from imperialistic to internationalistic, from a Kiplingesque enthusiasm for big armies and navies for the sake of national glory to an idealistic enthusiasm for setting the world right (of course the same size armies and navies would be temporarily required).

This Wilson shift in the nature of America's overseas concern quite transforms American isolationism. It had been up to then an aspect of the farmer's suspicion of the businessman, and part of the whole program of socialism and Populism. Now this body of doctrine was undermined by Wilson's vision of a world of small, peaceful, self-governing states. And this vision was capable of appealing to just those newer ethnic elements which were most indifferent or antagonistic to dreams of national glory. But at the same time this vision repelled many of the expansionist businessmen. The Eastern, pro-English elements among them could support Wilson. The Midwest expansionists, dating from the campaign of 1900, could not—in any case, they were more interested in the Pacific than the Atlantic.

In this fashion, an almost complete turnabout took place in the positions of those elements respectively supporting and opposing an active American foreign policy. The connection between socialist and Populist ideas and isolationism, on the one hand, and business thinking and world-mindedness on the other, was dissolved. For American foreign policy, as for so much else, Wilson's administrations were a watershed.

SINCE the campaign of 1920, it has not been necessary to add much to this picture. The tie-up between progressive thinking and isolationism was not dissolved immediately, of course—the presence of Bowles and Benton in the America First Committee show that. But since the election of 1920, isolationism has been predominantly the expression of the Midwest business and small-town mind, as well as of the resentment in a large bloc of the population of German origin. The former have supplied the leadership for isolationism—the latter, the mass base.

From the campaign against the League of Nations to the time of Nato, the heart of the opposition to any involvement in the concerns of the rest of the world has thus been solidly established in the Midwest, while "internationalist" and "interventionist" feeling has been found in the East, the South, and the West.

This is the geography of American foreign policy for the last twenty-five years—and as far as one can see, America will be divided along these lines for many years to come.

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Coercion from Within

THE CAPTIVE MIND. By CZESLAW MILOSZ. Knopf. 288 pp. $3.50.

Reviewed by PAUL KECSKEMETI

ONE of the basic ideas put forward in Czeslaw Milosz' extraordinary, noble, and frightening book is that even the best-informed Westerners in reality know nothing about what goes on behind the Iron Curtain. They are fundamentally ignorant, not because of lack of factual data—on the contrary, there is a great abundance of such data—but due to failure of imagination. All the isolated facts we know would add up to worthwhile knowledge only if we were to perceive the unifying pattern behind them. For this, however, imagination would be needed, and nobody is able to imagine a reality totally different from the one in which he has lived all his life. Thus, being informed about some stark and salient facts about life in the East, the Westerner blunderingly tries to explain them with the help of concepts and categories familiar to him. The result is a naively distorted picture, and, above all, total inability to guess why and how the Eastern despotism succeeds in its projects of regimentation. This inability to pierce the secret of the enemy's strength is, of course, one of the most important ingredients of that strength.

Mr. Milosz, who combines the talent of a superb analyst of social forces with that of poetic imagination, performs an invaluable service for the West. He helps our imagination escape from the bounds within which our happily limited experience has kept it confined. He tells us, in effect: "You know that intellectual terror and regimentation exist in the East. But you can *imagine* it only by trying to visualize what would happen if some people in the West, operating within the framework of your own culture, were trying to introduce terror and regimentation. All this, however, has nothing to do with what actually happened in the East. *That* is something you would never expect. Neither did we; and the fact that we were so utterly unprepared was what rendered us so completely powerless and defenseless in the face of the new reality."

What, in fact, did the normal, Western-type intellectuals (artists and writers) of Poland expect when the Communists took power? What would any Westerner expect? Basically,

THE EDITORS are pleased to announce the appearance on October 1st of a new international monthly magazine

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a struggle between "free minds" on the one hand, and brute force on the other. The intellectual would have his own thoughts and ideas; he would try to express them. Then, the official censorship would try to hinder free expression. The intellectual would protest nobly. Finally, he would be crushed by brute force, a martyr to the cause of liberty.

But what happened in reality? What happened was that this noble gesture of protest and martyrdom became impossible. The enemy did not observe the rules of the game. The neat line separating the community of the intellect from the apparatus of brute power never came into existence. Rather, the "free minds" themselves found that they were being transformed from within. The intellectual was put in the position where he no longer thought "his own" thoughts but those of someone else: a "system of symbols," a mental, intellectual force invaded his own private being and established itself as master within his own head. Neither brute coercion nor "narcotics," but this invasion of an all-powerful mental, intellectual force achieved the subjugation of the intellectual community.

The process is described in Milosz' book with extraordinary evocative power. He uses the technique of poetic metaphor: the invading intellectual force is likened to "the pill of Murti-Bing," a stultifying drug described in a Polish philosophical-allegorical novel. Then he proceeds to historical analogy, comparing the sly secret attitudes of protest of the captive intellectual to the medieval Islamic heresy of "Ketman." Finally, he presents vignettes, individual case studies of writers caught up in and swallowed by the process. The picture that emerges is concrete, sharply etched, unforgettable. It demonstrates the utter inadequacy of our traditional clichés of the "free" spirit struggling against *external* oppression.

No ATTEMPT can be made here to retrace the lines of Milosz' rich analysis. I shall mention only a few of the unforeseen things that happened to Polish intellectuals.

At first, nobody was "persecuted" or subjected to any high degree of pressure. On the contrary, all professional writers and artists, regardless of their political past, were invited to produce. The new state showed an extraordinary interest in, and solicitude for, creative work. This was no longer a hit-and-miss affair of individual effort, or of coteries and conventicles. Creative work was suddenly organized as a big industry with the might of the whole empire behind it. The artists found themselves in the wholly fantastic, unexpected, and unaccustomed position of big executives. They were suddenly part of the machine—and they discovered that they could go on doing creative work only by adapting themselves to the rhythm of the machine. The artists' own creative impulse (which the earlier bourgeois culture half despised, half respected, but in any case left alone) was now psychologically combined with the type of responsibility which the executive of a big state-owned industry must assume for the acceptability of the output in terms of specifications worked out on the highest levels of policy-making. Obviously, noble, individualistic gestures are impossible in this kind of situation; it is ridiculous for the individual executive to insist that the production plan must take his personal ideas or tastes into account. It is *his* problem how he can square the ineluctable requirements of his exalted, responsible position with his own personal idiosyncrasies. This could be done only by learning to think the thoughts of the system; but it had to be done, for otherwise creative work itself became impossible. And so, confronted with the choice of either working according to specifications or not creating at all, the intellectuals destroyed themselves.

On a practical level, this strategy of regimentation was successful; as Lincoln Steffens would say, "it works." The intellectuals do have the feeling that "falseness exists in the very core of the method," dialectical materialism, within the framework of which they are are expected to work. But they cannot reject the method wholesale, in radical fashion. For one thing, no alternative system of ideas of an equally rounded, integrated, and comprehensive nature is available. For another, dialectical materialism purports to spell out all the moral, humanitarian, progressive, and rational ideals that are dear to the true intellectual's heart. If, however, this identification between the "method" and moralistic progressivism is accepted, what is the use of caviling at details in the name of personal imponderables?

And yet, Milosz insists, the personal imponderables, while impotent in the face of the massive pressure of art as big industry, could not be completely silenced and eliminated. Some writers, after having succeeded in the work of self-transformation, suddenly

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could not go on and committed suicide. Others, like himself, fled into emigration, knowing full well what it means for a poet to be cut off from the people who speak his language. The rest, those who carry on, "work devotedly for the triumph of the imperium" and wait secretly for its downfall. Outwardly, the system of regimented intellect shows imposing strength; it is invincible because it recognizes no unsolved problems, no uncharted mysteries, no searching, no fragmentariness. The intellectuals who do rebel (either by putting a bullet through their head, or, like Milosz, by becoming pariahs in the West) can do so only in the name of the glorious uncertainty of the spiritual quest, of the fragmentariness of truth, of things imponderable and inexpressible. It is easy for the primitive totalitarian type to dismiss such opposition as utterly impotent and inconsequential. To the primitive mind, strength is where no problems exist. But we believe that strength which is achieved by recognizing no unsolved problems is illusory; the seemingly impotent and inconsequential voice of searching and dreaming man, a voice that can neither move nor stop machines, will still be heard when the machines grind themselves to death. This is the ultimate message of Milosz' magnificent book.

From Japan to the Adriatic

PAN-SLAVISM: ITS HISTORY AND IDEOLOGY. By HANS KOHN. University of Notre Dame Press. 356 pp. $6.25.

Reviewed by BOGDAN RADITSA

THE Pan-Slavist idea goes back, not so much to Russia, as to Prague during the heyday of German Romanticism in the second quarter of the 19th century. Like so many other romantic ideas, it was part of the rise of cultural and political nationalism and of economic liberalism. It represented a genuine yearning for justice and national fulfillment on the part of Slavic town "intellectuals"—professional men, schoolteachers, journalists, civil servants—stirred up by the heady atmosphere of freedom which the Napoleonic armies had brought to Eastern Europe.

Even in World War II the Yugoslav Communists could find no better slogan than that of the old Pan-Slavism to rally people to them. Through the mountains of Yugoslavia the catchword *"Od Japana do Jadrana"* ("From Japan to the Adriatic") found a ready response from thousands of Serbs, Montenegrins, Croats, and Slovenes, whereas the Marxian slogans never had much appeal.

Professor Hans Kohn's history of Pan-Slavism fills the long-standing need for an authoritative exposition in the English language of an idea and a movement which, though it accomplished nothing lasting and positive for the Slav peoples and only stimulated bloody conflicts and deepened existing differences, did at least cause the West to pay heed to forces they might otherwise have preferred to go on disregarding. Pan-Slavism has been the most original and native historical idea for all Slavs, Eastern, Western, and Southern; in this idea their mutual discord finds resolution, at least in theory. Marxism, on the other hand, is an alien doctrine imposed on Russians by the Bolsheviks, and on Southeast Europe by the agents, policemen, and bayonets of the Bolsheviks.

Shoddy thinkers, slovenly historians, bombastic rhetoricians, gloomy prophets, restless semi-intellectuals admiring and hating the West, the Pan-Slavists were to be found at or near the center of almost every great crisis of modern history. From Prague in 1848 and Petrograd in 1867 through Sarajevo in 1914 to the great upheaval in Russia in 1917 and the Soviet triumph over the Slavic lands in 1945, the Pan-Slavists worked ardently to destroy the old order. But they were incapable of replacing it with a new one based on peace with the West or harmony at home.

PROFESSOR KOHN'S impressive work sheds new light on the course of Slavic thought. In a sense, he has been able to penetrate the subject more deeply than his distinguished predecessor Thomas G. Masaryk, for he has seen the failure of many ideas whose realization Masaryk thought would usher in a happier day for the Slavs.

Dr. Kohn rightly finds the origin of Pan-Slavism in the influence of German Romanticism and the linguistic Pan-Germanism of Fichte and Herder following the French Revolution. It was in the 19th century that educated Slavs began eagerly to resuscitate long-forgotten national traditions, to study native folkways and local dialects. But the effect of this was an exaggerated historicism that helped isolate the Slavs from the West and from one

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another. One cannot speak of Pan-Slavism as a united cultural and political movement. "On the contrary," Dr. Kohn states, "political and historical realities, differences of religion and civilization, ran counter to the Pan-Slav aspirations. The affinity of the Slav languages and the belief in a very doubtful common ancestry in pre-historic times offered no solid foundation for unity."

The deep cultural divisions that set the Roman Catholic Poles and Croats, who consider themselves the bulwark of Western civilization in East Europe, against the Russians and to a certain degree the Serbs, is perhaps the most striking example of this disunity. There are also the Serbs and Bulgarians, who, though sharing the same Byzantine tradition as the Russians, have fought one another incessantly; while Ukrainians fought Russians, and Czechs Slovaks. Today, though bowed under the same Soviet yoke, they are as much at odds with one another as before.

THE original Pan-Slavism of the Western Slavs, liberal and humanitarian, was succeeded by the reactionary and obstructionist Pan-Russism of the Russian Pan-Slavs Danilevsky and Chadayev. The latter, turning their backs on the West, called for the revival of a new Byzantium led by a messianic Russia; in effect, they prepared the way for the Russian-dominated East Europe that we have today.

These confused and megalomaniacal ideas were exploited by the Kremlin and the Yugoslavs during World War II to win Slav support. Tito, who in November 1947 thanked Stalin and the Red Army for having "liberated . . . the Slav nations," was the first to declare, one year later, that Pan-Slavism and the Slavic brotherhood were a mystification used by the Great Russians to subjugate the Slav nations. Moshe Pijade, Milovan Gjilas, and other Yugoslav theoreticians, in their polemics with the Stalin regime, concluded that there was no essential difference between the policy followed by czarist Pan-Slavism toward Serbia in the great Balkan crisis of 1878, and the Kremlin's policy today toward the Yugoslavs, Bulgarians, Czechoslovaks, and Ukrainians, as well as Hungarians, Rumanians, and Albanians.

Whatever the outcome of the present situation in Slavic Europe, there is no doubt that the Kremlin is incapable of satisfying the legitimate aspirations of the Slav peoples and of fulfilling the "principles of liberty, equality,

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and diversity, on which the Pan-Slav movement insisted in 1848," as Dr. Kohn puts it. The Soviet empire may founder on just this rock of Slav hostility. Together with the end of Pan-Russian Communism, the world may then see the end of Pan-Slavism too, when the Slavic nations will have at last secured their independence in a world of free nations.

Pseudo-Fictions

THE HATE MERCHANT. By NIVEN BUSCH. Simon and Schuster. 338 pp. $3.95.

SIMPLE TAKES A WIFE. By LANGSTON HUGHES. Simon and Schuster. 240 pp. $1.95.

THE HUMAN KIND. By ALEXANDER BARON. Ives Washburn. 187 pp. $2.75.

PATROL. By FRED MAJDALANY. Houghton Mifflin. 149 pp. $2.00.

A BARGAIN WITH GOD. By THOMAS SAVAGE. Simon and Schuster. 243 pp. $3.00.

THE GOOD-FOR-NOTHING. By JAMES YAFFE. Little, Brown. 249 pp. $3.50.

THE SOUTHPAW. By MARK HARRIS. Bobbs-Merrill. 350 pp. $3.50.

WHITE HUNTER, BLACK HEART. By PETER VIERTEL. Doubleday. 344 pp. $3.95.

MARTHA CRANE. By CHARLES GORHAM. Farrar, Straus and Young. 250 pp. $3.00.

Reviewed by STANLEY EDGAR HYMAN

WE badly need a name for books that appear to be novels and are not. I would propose calling them "pseudo-fictions," on the analogy of I. A. Richards' "pseudo-questions" and "pseudo-statements," which would not only name them accurately—they are false-fictions rather than non-fictions—but might lend our activities some of the optimistic semantics-will-save-us tone of a quarter of a century ago, as though all these complicated matters could readily be put in order. Here is a mixed bag of nine recent books published as novels, no one of which is a work of fiction if we insist, not on a definition, but on certain minimal requirements: that fiction is an exercise of the moral imagination; that it organize experience into a form with a beginning, middle, and end; and that it center around a dramatic action. A pseudo-fiction can be quite a good work of its sort—one thinks of John Hersey's reportorial *The Wall* or Mary McCarthy's diaristic *The Company She Keeps*—although most of them are not; what must be recognized is that its sort is not the form we have traditionally called the novel. The appreciation the pseudo-fiction aims at is "Yes, that is just what it must be like"; the inescapable sense any work of the fictive imagination, from *Don Quixote* to *Miss Lonelyhearts*, gives is "Life is surely nothing like this anywhere. This is art."

Niven Busch's *The Hate Merchant* is an account of a Huey Long henchman who becomes a preacher specializing in race hatred, a figure suspiciously like the "Reverend" Gerald L. K. Smith. The book starts well with a convincing documentation of its protagonist's down-and-out beginnings, but soon dissolves into absurdity, labored soliloquies explaining the cash value of race hatred, and the usual preposterous, sexually eccentric daughter of the rich. Busch can write an anti-Semitic oration to give you the creeps, his principles are unassailably liberal and his intentions excellent, but he has neither imagination nor insight, and his book remains, despite its topping of fiction sprinklers, a magazine exposé.

Langston Hughes' new book is, like its predecessor, *Simple Speaks His Mind*, a collection of columns from the *Chicago Defender*, the vagaries of American life seen through the eyes of Jesse B. Semple, an uneducated Negro workingman of considerable humor and eloquence. Simple's opinions, counterpointed by the narrator's educated reservations, are worth having, and his sly monologues manage the difficult feat of being ingratiating without loss of dignity, but the shreds of plot, laboring the complications besetting Simple's courtship of a strong-willed woman named Joyce, are a pointless intrusion. Simple's language is a conventionalized folk speech rather than any Negro speech with which I am familiar; his humor is the sophistication masked as innocence, the fool outsmarting those who patronize him, that is a characteristic note in Negro (as well as Jewish) humor; only the elements of hackneyed "story" betray an honest traditional form, the Folk Sage of the newspaper column, into pseudo-fiction.

The subtitle of Alexander Baron's *The Hu-*

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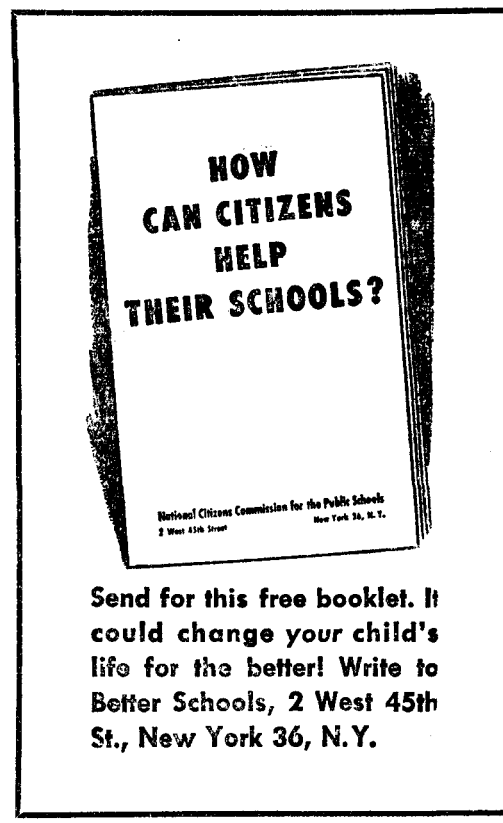
man Kind is "A Sequence," and it is apparently meant to be a series of related fiction sketches, centering in the war and adding up to more than the sum of their parts. Actually the sketches are shapeless snatches of life, impressionistic essays, thin slices of experience buttered with the writer's naive intrusions. Many of them appear to be by-products of Baron's novels, and one sketch even opposes "the thing that really happened" to a previous fictional rendering. Baron seems to be a kind of English Albert Halper or James Farrell—earnest, honest, decent, rather admirable in his reactions, and utterly without literary talent or perception.

Patrol, by Fred Majdalany, another English soldier, this one demobilized with the rank of major, is a transparently autobiographical account of a patrol reconnaissance in North Africa. As a reporting of a single military action by a participant, it is compact, readable, and convincing; to make it a novel Majdalany has tricked it out with horrible "plucky chaps," British army sentimentality, some jerky flashback machinery, an infuriating second-person style, and one entire hogshead of cheap irony about headquarters obliviousness to front-line human waste. *Patrol's* jacket compares it to *The Red Badge of Courage,* but of course, Crane *wasn't* there, he didn't know *just what it was like.*

Some books are disgusting, with the spurious piety of a certain kind of professional beggar, and Thomas Savage's *A Bargain With God* is such a book. Savage teaches Creative Writing at Brandeis, and one can only hope that he does not teach it like this. His book is about an Anglican mission church in Boston, condemned to destruction by poverty and saved by a soapy miracle, complete with saintly priest, Robert Nathan parishioners, shoddy religious symbolism (a sparrow on a cross-piece), and arch, tear-jerking prose. Savage has the grace to leave his happy ending implied rather than writing it out, but he has no other grace at all.

James Yaffe's *The Good-for-Nothing,* disguised as a novel like the rest, is actually a radio serial, a Riverside Drive Goldbergs ("Should Leo be allowed to marry Brenda?"). Yaffe favors the jacket of his book with a bold pronunciamento about "my desire to write about people as I see them," which would be a worthier ideal if he did not see them as stock family types, speaking unfailingly in character in a curious travesty of human speech. "To my mind," Yaffe adds, "this is the only legitimate concern of a writer who is really serious about his work." Thus we have noble, self-sacrificing Norman; worthless, charming Leo; domineering but warm-hearted Aunt Ruth; whining, widowed Aunt Fanny; and the rest of the really serious writer's embarrassing puppets.

The Southpaw is an Inside Baseball book—when an illegal spitball is thrown, why you don't play Dom DiMaggio in a drizzle, what the catcher says to the pitcher when he goes to the mound, etc.—in the form of a first-person narrative told by a brash left-handed wonder somewhat resembling Dizzy Dean, employed by a composite New York team. The plot is inane, involving the narrator's psychosomatic back ailment, the beautiful and dissolute daughter of the club's owner, an unprincipled sports writer, and such cardboard; the language, with "swang" for "swung" and "ivory" for "major leaguer," is the affectation of broadcasters, not the diction of players; and the baseball sentimentality, full of plays executed "like a fine machine," is not only out of character but a constant irritation. The book's one attrac-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tive novelty is its approval of the hero's physical cowardice—his response to any fight is to go into his "Coward Crouch" and protect his face—which is as surprising in a book celebrating the Great American Game as it is rare and welcome at a time when conformity to an American ideal indistinguishable from Scouting seems so overwhelming.

PETER VIERTEL, who went to the Congo to work on the script of *The African Queen* for John Huston, tells in *White Hunter, Black Heart* (surely the year's worst title) of a script writer named Peter Verrill, who went to the Congo to work on the script of *The Trader* for a director named John Wilson. I doubt that the veneer of fiction has ever been quite so thin since Herr Issyvoo gave us his Berlin experiences. There is a genuine gossip interest in learning about John Huston's outsize quirks, with special bus trips to see Miss Hepburn and Mr. Bogart, and a long stopover to hear the white racists in Africa get ticked off, but after a while the book's obsessive concern with the writer-director relationship as a complicated emotional courtship becomes overpowering, and the book dissolves into bathos. If we are looking for the aesthetic of pseudo-fiction, Viertel is delighted to phrase it for us: "Form had always baffled me," Verrill says. "There's no plot. Peoples' lives are simply exposed," Wilson says as his highest praise of his idol, Hemingway. It may also be the last word on *White Hunter, Black Heart.*

Finally, we have Charles Gorham's *Martha Crane,* which is a tabloid feature story on the Jelke case. How did Sandra Wisotsky, or whoever, get that way, the great panting public asks, and what held her to Mickey? Gorham is perfectly willing to tell us. His Martha Crane had a father complex; she was drawn to Farkas, the Jelke character, by his evil beauty and brutality, her masochism responding to his sadism; she fitted into the call-girl life beautifully, since she was a Radcliffe girl, and the work gave her plenty of time to study Greek in the afternoons. *Martha Crane* is ludicrous in just that too-much-of-a-good-thing fashion, with an abundance of sex and beating women into insensibility for the circulating library ladies, parlor psychoanalysis for the reviewers, melodrama for the movies, and trade tips for all us girls from Radcliffe.

REVIEWING a novel by Patrick Hamilton in a recent *New Statesman,* Walter Allen wrote: "Mr. Hamilton has very cunningly dodged the novelist's real issue by going back to the pre-history of the novel, going back, in fact, to that seventeenth-century literary exercise, the Character." These nine writers have not so much gone back to pre-history as created novels (or permitted their publishers to create them) out of other forms—the impressionistic essay, the collection of newspaper columns, the religious parable, the magazine exposé, the first-person account of a battle—which once had a market in hard covers and no longer do. An act of conscious deception is not necessarily involved; the novel as *the* literary form with an audience and the concept of "fictionalizing" are oppressive in our cultural climate. (Now that the novel no longer sells as it did, in comparison with non-fiction, it will be interesting to see whether the next decade reverses the process, and gets us our *Moby-Dicks* as *The Whales Around Us.*) Many of these authors are good men, full of excellent intentions: Hughes, Busch, and Viertel clearly abominate racism, and strike doughty blows in their various fashions against it: Baron and Yaffe patently love and understand their fellow man, and want to put in a good word for these virtues; Harris and Majdalany are in reaction against the romanticizing of their respective sports, and desperately want to give us "the lowdown" on them.

Most of these writers have theories about the real world their books mirror: Gorham wants us to know that Pat Ward must have been unmoral and masochistic, and Jelke perverted; Viertel that John Huston is a sick and suffering personality; Harris that professional sport is not glamorous but tough, dirty, and nerve-wracking; Yaffe that the victims in family relations *want* to be victimized; Majdalany that war is mostly pointless butchery; Baron that people are fundamentally decent; Hughes that an uneducated colored man is as rare and valuable a personality as yours or Ralph Waldo Emerson's; Busch that professional rabble-rousers are less shrewd than mentally warped. It is good to know those things, if we do not already know them, and we may even act on some of them. But if we want to know other things about man, about the deepest places of the human heart, the things that *Ulysses* or *Karamazov* tell us, we will have to go elsewhere. If we insist that even learning comes, not from the telling, but from an experience, in this case an aesthetic experience, the sym-

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bolic living *through* a moral and imaginative drama that a work of art represents, we will not find it possible to be content with pseudo-fictions.

Two Post-Wagnerians

MAURICE RAVEL. By VICTOR I. SEROFF. Holt. 310 pp. $3.75.

NOTES WITHOUT MUSIC: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY. By DARIUS MILHAUD. Knopf. 355 pp. $5.00.

Reviewed by JOSEPH KERMAN

NO OTHER figure in the history of the arts has had a traumatic effect like that of Richard Wagner. For half a century after the War of 1870, the various Wagner-directed neuroses worked themselves out gloomily in French musical life. Only the leaders of the Conservatoire could ignore Wagnerism; everybody else had to be either entirely for it or entirely against. On one side there was the *Revue Wagnérienne*, César Franck, his despotic pupil Vincent d'Indy, and the Schola Cantorum, stronghold of Wagnerism, Catholicism, scholarship, and petty nationalism. On the other side there was a line of lively rebels. Debussy, the first and undoubtedly the most significant, progressed far between *L'après-midi* in 1894 and his death in 1918. Next was Ravel, in the 1900's, with his rather astonishing combination of the "impressionistic" technical means of Debussy with the precise habits of French conservatism. A strong *fauve* influence came from abroad: Diaghilev with Moussorgsky and Stravinsky, and later *le jazz*. (It was in America, rather than in Paris, that the young Ernest Bloch made a stir with "barbarism.") Meanwhile German romanticism was becoming more and more decadent, and really deserved the vicious parody of Ravel's *La Valse*. When reaction was precipitated by the war, Ravel fell behind as Cocteau spoke up for a new protesting generation, soon narrowed down to *"les Six."* He proclaimed a new platform of brevity, banality, and chic, which Milhaud and Honegger, at least, have survived with considerable honor. After this concerted treatment, the Wagner-complex has presumably been cured to the satisfaction of everybody, even those who are constitutionally cool towards French music.

Ravel has his permanent place; he is a minor master, if only on account of his transcendent technique. Victor I. Seroff's book on the composer unfortunately does not illuminate history or criticism, and even in its class of popular biography it cannot be said to be written with much style or with much awareness. But there is an irrepressible sharpness to Seroff's observation that makes the book well worth reading, apart from the invaluable translations of so many polemic documents from the various *affaires Ravel*. Among these is the manifesto "French Music for the French," promoted in 1916 by Saint-Saëns, d'Indy, and others, together with the clear, dignified letter by Ravel, refusing to add his name—whereupon they threatened to instigate a public boycott of his music. But Ravel lived on to an unprecedented popular success, which was one bright feature to a quietly pathetic life; another must have been his circle of friends, unusually devoted for so inhibited a person. One of them, Roland-Manuel, has written the "official" biography—and it has been translated into English

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(London, 1947; British Book Centre, $2.00), though this is not mentioned in the bibliography of this present book, which the publishers claim as the only Ravel biography available in English. Roland-Manuel has all the qualities that Seroff lacks: authority, learning, sophistication, reverence, dullness; his short volume does attempt to study the music, and spares us the pen-pictures of Morocco, the Basque country, and Montmartre, with its *apaches* "unanimously exhibiting their utter disdain for the world by their caps worn at a rakish angle on their pomaded heads and cigarettes drooping from their disgusted lips." Seroff, incidentally, offers no more support than anyone else for the legend that Ravel was half-Jewish; he is the first to admit that his brash investigations into Ravel's maternal origins were for the most part courteously and efficiently stymied. In revenge, he is inclined to throw doubts on the Basque blood of which Ravel was so proud.

Darius Milhaud's heritage is Jewish and Provençal, as he emphasizes in the charming opening chapters of his memoirs. From his feeling for the countryside, perhaps, comes the pastoral lyricism in so much of his music, and from his cultural and religious tradition comes the inspiration for *Esther de Carpentras* (which one would like to see), the Synagogue songs, the admirable Service of 1947, and the opera *David* commissioned for Israel. But then what explains his even stronger affection for Brazilian folk song, and for American jazz? In the last analysis, the essential formative force in Milhaud's career has been Paris, the same Paris that created Ravel. The 1914 war finished Ravel, and gave Milhaud his start, but it seems to have affected the artistic life of that city curiously little. Avant-garde Paris was still populated by sons and daughters of the bourgeoisie, with an occasional aristocrat; musicians moved in literary circles, and were expected to listen, not to think; *querelles* were malicious, audiences were boisterous, and the fads were absolutely incredible. The same Erik Satie encouraged Debussy in the 80's, Ravel in the 90's, Milhaud in 1919, and Sauguet a few years later. And

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This *I Believe*

By Robert M. Hutchins*

"... ONE gets from some of the statesmen of the day the impression, that under the influence of the Cold War, they have concluded that a country is not safe unless it is united, which is true, and then that a country cannot be united unless everybody in it agrees with everybody else about everything, which is false. The pleas for unity during the last electoral campaign had the same specious quality. That civilization of which a true university is a paradigm is one that is based on the premise that the truth is arrived at by discussion. Discussion implies that there is more than one point of view. The notion that the truth is arrived at by discussion is peculiarly applicable to practical, political, economic matters. A civilization in which the opinion of the majority is taken on such matters and must then be adopted by all is one that is doomed to stagnation. It ignores the fact that the most precious possession of any society is the thought of the minority, even a minority of one. The rule of the majority without discussion and criticism is tyranny.

"A great new term of reproach nowadays is 'controversial.' A university that is not controversial is not a university. A civilization in which there is not a continuous controversy about important issues, speculative and practical, is on the way to totalitarianism and death.

"Such a society may be said to be united, but it cannot be regarded as strong. We do not think it is a sign of strength that the rulers of Russia find it necessary to seek out and punish dissent. On the contrary, we have sense enough to see that the secret police and the Iron Curtain and the universal program of indoctrination practiced in Russia amount to a confession of weakness. The rulers of Russia do not have enough confidence in the adherence of the people to the principles of Communism—or in those principles themselves—to permit a free continuing discussion of them. If we want an example of a strong society all we have to do is to look at that association of thirteen struggling states which at the outset of its career, as it faced a sea of troubles, adopted the Bill of Rights of our Constitution. The United States of that day may have looked weak and disunited. Actually it was strong because it was not afraid. It was not afraid to have its principles submitted to critical examination. It was united in the conviction that strength and progress lay not in social and political conformity, but in the constant exercise of individual judgment, in independent thought and criticism."

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*Reprinted from May 1953 issue of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, and based on one of a series of Walgreen lectures given at the University of Chicago, April 6-9, 1953. The series of four lectures will be published in book form by the University of Chicago Press late this year. Copyright by The University of Chicago.

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now we are treated to the spectacle of the controversial Milhaud, like Murger's original Rudolfo for *La Bohème,* appointed professor at the Conservatoire! *Plus ça change. . . .*

Milhaud's memoirs, *Notes Without Music,* do not penetrate the brilliant, exasperating surface of Parisian intellectual life. Nor, to be truthful, do they tell much about Milhaud himself or about his music, for they are written with a generosity, discretion, and detachment that are nothing short of heroic. The book is less an autobiography than a chronicle of the people he has known, the places he has been, and the pieces he has written. Now each of these categories is very large indeed: Millhaud has been in contact with Claudel, Gide, Perse, Cocteau, Anouilh, Alma Mahler, Diaghilev, and Picasso, to mention a few of the non-musicians; he has visited Denmark, Sicily, Brazil, California, Russia, Turkey, Israel; he had composed 320 *opera* at the last count. Thus the chronicle is extensive, and always fascinating; but as long as the author stays so resolutely on the surface, it is never informative. There are unforgettable pictures, to be sure: Gédalge, pedagogue of pedagogues, receiving the boy composer with a beret on his head and a chop in his hand; the improbable Rio embassy of 1917, with Claudel, Henri Hoppenot, and Milhaud; Milhaud at the theater with his dear friends Honegger and Sauguet, Honegger snatching off Sauguet's glasses "—without these the poor fellow could see absolutely nothing—and threatening to knock his face in if he persisted in his attitude." The chapter on the death of Satie is suddenly lyrical and full, like an aria amid stretches of elegant recitative. But elsewhere it is hard to get an impression of all these interesting people, and Milhaud in relation to them, whether they are close associates like Claudel, Lunel and Honegger, or the critics who have (we learn) continuously dragged his name through the mud.

Of Milhaud's reactions to music we are told practically nothing. What does he really have against Ravel, for instance? There is one composer, and only one, whom he is prepared to berate, and that is Richard Wagner. He can do so without a trace of personal animosity, for if there was anything that could be taken for granted in Paris at the time of the First World War, it was that one rejected Wagnerism, turgidity, grandiosity, and the late-romantic musical mystique. Well, that battle has been won.

The Art of Business

MAKE ME AN OFFER. By WOLF MANKOWITZ. Dutton. 94 pp. $2.00.

Reviewed by MORRIS FREEDMAN

ESSENTIALLY Wolf Mankowitz's quaint little book is a tough-guy detective story chase. It's been dressed up with a late Victorian pink and black jacket and finely detailed line drawings, but the language and movement are out of early Hammett. There is the characteristic brooding passage of self-examination by the hero which ends with a "to hell with it," and the typically understated description of a female: "She was wearing jodhpurs and a yellow sweater, and her figure didn't suffer by it."

What made Hammett's revelations of a private detective's adventures so compelling was their authenticity; Hammett has been a private detective. Mr. Mankowitz, identified by the publisher as "a famed London dealer in Wedgewood china," writes knowingly and unsentimentally about a Jewish antique dealer's involvement in an auction and about his search for a rare, beautiful Portland vase. The documentary approach and the Hemingway-like pretension to not being a literary man give him a legitimate chance to linger lovingly over the rich jargon and insane complexities of a trade A fine no-nonsense efficiency makes his brief character sketches tartly alive. After all, a shrewd businessman, like a shrewd detective, must have a capacity to judge human beings at least as developed as that of a writer.

The businessman as artist is rare. When he does take up art, like Wallace Stevens or Henry Green, he does so as a hobby, detaching his writing from his business. Dealer-novelist Mankowitz, however, uses the incongruity of business and writing as a basic joke, deriving much of his piquant effect from it. The farcical machinations preceding the auction scene, in which the hero juggles an astonishing combination of different private arrangements with other potential bidders, could not strike Mankowitz as antique dealer funny, or as something from which to separate himself. As writer, however, he stands off and describes the piling on of double-crosses with the hilarity of extravagant exaggeration.

Jobbing art treasures, on the face of it, is a wild enterprise, and all sorts of monstrous jokes are possible, as appeared from S. N. Behr-

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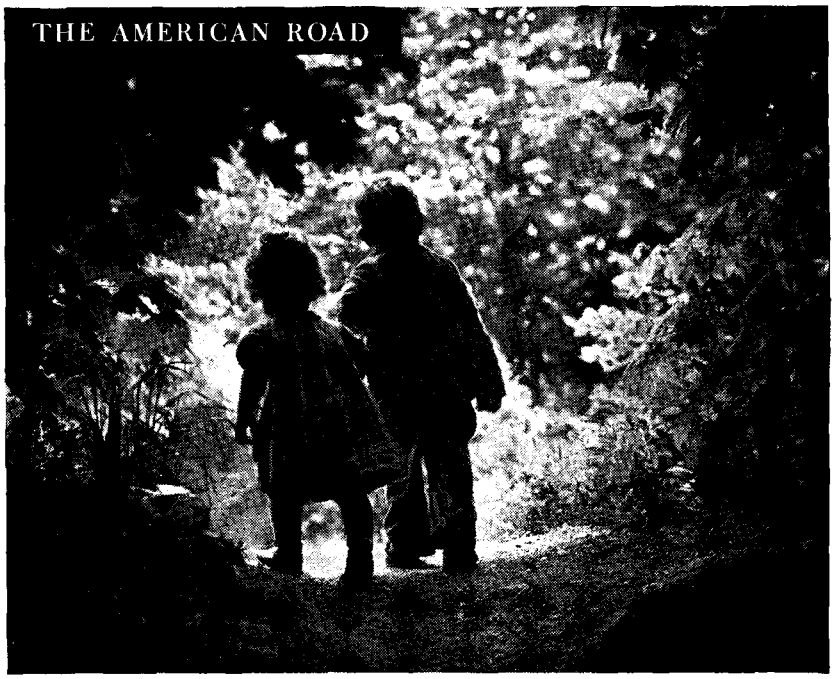

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for brethren to dwell in unity! Psalms 133:1

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man's recent account of the fabulous Jewish art middleman, Joseph Duveen, who helped billionaires spend their gains. According to Behrman (the fact that he is crassly wrong about his hero—whose love for his merchandise was an essential ingredient of his success in selling it—is beside the point here), Duveen's genius, among other places, lay in his remaining uncorrupted by the beauty of his goods. Mr. Mankowitz's hero, however, presumably like the author himself, lacks the great businessman's purity of indifference toward his product and becomes dangerously enamored of the magnificent Wedgwood vase, the only one of its kind, which is completely useless for profit since it has been stolen and can only be enjoyed in secret. The vase may be taken to represent the siren call of art for art's sake; the pleasure in it, the self-indulgent luxury of writing a novel instead of tending to business.

This ancient conflict between the eternal but often profitless values of art or scholarship or theology and the immense but transitory gratifications that come from sheer money in the pocket is set forth baldly and without careful control. A long justification of the dealer's business is filled with an excess of guilty bravado; and some of the crudeness is pretentious. Also, like doctors and circus people, the narrator tries to make his work seem a calling. These undertones of self-depreciation and uncertainty soften the hard professionalism, a principal virtue of trade confessions in the form of fiction.

Mr. Mankowitz has nothing to be defensive about. Novelists, in the tradition of James, have too long kept their work clean of contact with the world of carpentry, plumbing, buying and selling—the practical craftsmanship of rooted daily living. Ideally, Mankowitz should have used his experience as a dealer in the same way Conrad used his as a sailor, as the difficult and respectable stuff from which to shape art—with no apologies. But as a curiously Jewish book, *Make Me An Offer* suggests in its imperfection, in its tensions, the uncomfortable straining of the Jewish artist envious or contemptuous of business; of the Jewish businessman lavishly and compulsively supporting the rabbinate or a university; of the intellectual itching to work with his hands.

Book Reviewers in This Issue

Nathan Glazer is an associate editor of Commentary.

Paul Kecskemeti, a member of the staff of Rand, an independent research organization, is engaged in studies of totalitarianism.

Stanley Edgar Hyman is the author of *The Armed Vision*, a volume of criticism.

Joseph Kerman is a member of the music department of the University of California.

Bogdan Raditsa, a leading Yugoslav political figure who opposed the Titoist dictatorship, is in exile from his country.

Morris Freedman is in the department of English at the City College of New York.

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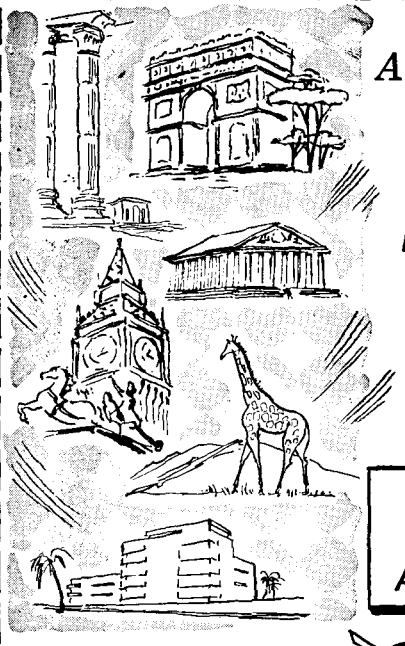

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